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IS THE REGENERATION OF
TURKEY POSSIBLE?

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BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY

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PREFACE

MY friend, Monsieur Georgiades, has asked me to present his book to the public. The public will doubtless think such an introduction superfluous, for every one at all interested in Greek and Oriental affairs knows with what weight he treats the great diplomatic questions in which are bound up the interests of the nations in the east of Europe.

This book, moreover, reaches us in a most opportune fashion. To the author it may perhaps be a matter for regret that his being so far off should have caused some delay. Certain of his prophecies have already been fulfilled ; but, no matter, his work is none the less useful in helping us to perceive the difficulties of the future, whilst enlightening us in regard to the present. The present ! I very much fear we understand but little about it. Europe, as far as I can see, inadequately informed as to events which were taking place on the spot, has judged more par-

ticularly according to her own ideas in taking for granted certain situations and facts to which she is accustomed.

She has seen a political and sanguinary régime give way before its adversaries, the Young-Turks, whose indignation and complaints she has heard for a long time past.

What was this, if it was not absolute power upset by a great liberal movement? What did the problem resolve itself into, if not the institution and maintenance of a parliamentary system like in France, like in England, like in all progressive countries? Doubtless the words will preserve their local colour: the constitutional head of the State will be the Sultan, the Prime Minister will be the Grand Vizier, and so on; but what of that: one is not in Turkey for nothing, and, fundamentally, there is nothing new—the Young-Turks have re-enacted 1789, they have set up liberty on the ruins of tyranny.

These disingenuous views explain no doubt the hesitation, I might almost say the indifference, of Europe when she found herself face to face with events calculated, nevertheless, to disconcert her not a little. The press was gagged, the elections

which displeased those in authority were cancelled, and new candidates were not proposed, but forced upon the electorate. Europe was a little surprised, but reserved her judgment.

Already in 1862, when the massacres of the Christians took place in the Lebanon, the whole civilised world rose in indignation, and France more than any other country hastened to intervene, and effected a military occupation of the country.

The massacres have recommenced, they have covered Adano with blood, and what have the Great Powers done? They have sent a few vessels to cruise in the Mediterranean Archipelago, with the threat to "make a naval demonstration" in case the "massacres continue."

When Constantinople was captured by the Young-Turks, measures of repression were carried out with violence and excess, well-nigh with ferocity. No one said a word; indeed, there are many among us who think that all is well, and that one can afford to shed a little, indeed a good deal of blood for the triumph of liberty.

Is it, however, a question of liberty? One has rarely asked oneself the question: If it is not a question of liberty, what is it?

M. Georgiades' book has come amongst us to arouse us from our lethargy and to awaken our suspicions. There are doubtless, he tells us, sincere liberals amongst the Young-Turks, but it is not they who are now governing. There are Young-Turks and Young-Turks ; the conquerors of to-day seem to be less taken up with the idea of establishing liberty than with making their own party to triumph, and substituting one kind of tyranny for another.

The political question in Turkey is complicated with another, infinitely more difficult and dangerous—that of nationalities and religious fanaticism. If the principal effect of the revolution which has just taken place be to subject the Christian people more thoroughly to the despotism and violence of the Moslem population, it is difficult to see how any progress has been effected, or in what respect the revolution merits the sympathies of Europe.

Turkey has for a long time been accustomed to see the Powers gathered round the deathbed of the "Sick Man of Europe," eyeing each other distrustfully the while. Can she believe that their ambitions are now assuaged ? Certainly not.

She is evolving in the midst of perils, and if

she allow herself to be carried away by fanaticism, if she permit massacres, military interventions, and barbarous executions to multiply, she will merely be offering a chance to those who are greedily watching her, and may very likely become too tempting a prey.

For us, in France, who have already taken in advance a part of our inheritance, we can, as far as the rest is concerned, show ourselves more disinterested, and we need not hesitate to sincerely hope that the heads of the new movement may thoroughly understand the great duties which are incumbent upon them.

"The future belongs to the wise," says M. Georgiades. Yes, no doubt ; but in the Ottoman Empire, as elsewhere, even more than elsewhere, wisdom means mutual tolerance and justice for all.

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IS THE REGENERATION OF TURKEY POSSIBLE ?

CHAPTER I

THE MORROW OF THE SULTAN ABD-UL-HAMID II.'S REIGN

A NATIVE of Asia Minor (of the province of Smyrna), I have never, during more than thirty years, ceased busying myself with the economical and political questions of the East.

Sixteen years ago I wrote :—

“The Ottoman Empire, whose strength and prestige are waning considerably, especially since the usurpation of power by the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid, is fallen into the rank of those States which cannot subsist but by the toleration of Europe and the protection of at least one Great Power. . . .”

And notably since the Russo-Turkish war has

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Turkey fallen into a kind of apathy. Plunged in the most barbarous disorder, she is now nothing but the caricature of a State amongst civilised nations. Founded upon the egotism of her conqueror, the Ottoman Empire has never risen above military despotism, although this despotism has never borrowed any of the kindly characteristics of Western despotism, which, maturing under a bourgeois system of philanthropy, sets itself to watch over both State and people, both the home and the family. All these things which, amongst other peoples, it is the duty of the State to ensure, viz. the safety of both person and property, liberty, honour, intellectual culture—all these things, I say, are utterly denied to Ottoman subjects, not excepting the Turkish people themselves.

A thoughtful and witty writer who has written a great deal on Turkey, and at one time had an opportunity of studying the cupidity of the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid's former *entourage*, and of witnessing the corruption of the great ones of the Yildiz-Kiosk, thus expresses himself in speaking of Turkey :—

“ The East is a fairyland, but beware of going into the slums, for there nothing but change and disenchantment await you. Under the scrutinis-

ing eye of the psychologist and the economist the fairest appearances give way to misleading realities ; attraction gives place to repulsion ; disappointment grips at your heart and rises bitterly within you. One understands, then, how this beautiful country has been injured by men ; this rich and generous land has nothing but misery within ; under this purest of skies nothing but horror ; in those marble palaces nothing but depravity of every kind ; in the midst of the great calm of nature one instinctively feels all the craftiness of egotism, and across the perfume of the jessamine is wafted the odour of corruption.

“ This is indeed a people in process of decomposition : disorder, cupidity, ambition, vice, crime, all swarm in the turgid streams that pour heir unclean tribute into the noble waters of the Golden Horn. As one goes deeper and deeper into the sub-strata of life in Constantinople, one is more and more profoundly startled at the amount of corruption, which seems to have no limits, and which has slowly eaten into so beautiful a body, leaving it nothing but the semblance of life.”

And the picture is true to the life.

This has not, however, prevented sycophants

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and their kind from describing this epoch of the Hamidian régime as the Golden Age of Turkey, at the same time calling the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid "le Sultan Soleil," often likening him to Philip II., Louis XIV., and even to Moses.

In support of this statement I quote the following, which appeared in a Berlin paper in 1892 :—

"Any one who, during the last twenty years, may have followed the events of which the Ottoman Empire has been the theatre must admit that it is a long time since it has enjoyed an era of progress comparable to that which we are now traversing. There is a new vitality everywhere, everywhere a new order of things.

"Who is the magician who has aroused the East from its lethargy of centuries? Who is the powerful man who, like Moses, has made water to spring from the rock?

"The Kaliph and Sultan, Abd-ul-Hamid, who to-day bears the prophet's sword, and who fills the throne of Osman."

The author of this piece of buffoonery had the hardihood to deliver his name to publicity, and notwithstanding that he is himself an Israelite, he

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appears to be unaware of the fact that Moses' chief title to glory was the fact of his having delivered the Jewish people from the oppression of the Pharaohs. Furthermore, this prophet, the greatest figure in the Old Testament, was a warrior, a statesman, an historian, a poet, a moralist, and a legislator. In what does Abd-ul-Hamid recall Moses, he who has so often violated his own oath and the laws of his country, a monarch who has given repeated proofs of cowardice, who has imprisoned and maltreated his brothers, and who has exploited and vilified his people ?

CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTION OF THE 11/24TH JULY 1908, AND THE PROGRAMME OF THE LIBERAL YOUNG-TURKS

ANY one wishing to know how the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid is judged in the present day by the most enlightened men in the Empire has only to read the numerous Turkish newspapers published in Constantinople, in the provinces, and abroad. The following is the leading article which appeared in the *Turquie Nouvelle*, the organ of the Liberal Ottoman party, the day after the revolution of July 1908, under the heading:—

“YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY”

“The criminal despotism, the ferocious oppression, and the savage tyranny under which the Ottoman nation has laboured for thirty-two years, have come to an end.

“For more than a quarter of a century hordes

of spies have been battenning upon the substance of the people ; monster-faced creatures, official and gaily-bedizened brigands, who would disgrace any throne and country, reigned as absolute masters. By a system of espionage, extortion, and pillage, like a hateful scourge, they spread leanness, misery, and mutual distrust everywhere.

“Corruption was manifest everywhere, from top to bottom of the ladder, for diplomatists, chamberlains, ministers, or simple scribes—and their name was legion—all exercised their own degree of despotism.

“The consequences of this lamentable state of affairs are universally known. Turkey was making great strides towards her own ruin. Whilst internally enfeebled by the worm of corruption gnawing at her vitals, externally the greatness of our past had become no more than an empty word destitute of meaning. Our moral prestige was null, and we blushed at being Ottomans ; we suffered vexations without number and without name—we were ashamed of ourselves.”

“I shall never forget,” writes Salih B. Gourdji, the director of the *Turquie Nouvelle*, over his own signature, “the indescribable and helpless anguish

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of the past, and all the sufferings which we Ottomans living in a foreign land were exposed to every time that any hostile manifestation occurred, or when we read, with tears in our eyes, any account of those discussions between foreign Powers who, under pretence of bringing order to our land, establishing law there and wresting it from the jaws of barbarism, had an eye all the time on the spoil to be found."

No, indeed, those are times which we shall never forget.

Since the 24th July, a day for ever memorable in the annals of the Ottoman Empire, tyranny has been dethroned by the will of the people, and, like the 14th July in France, we trust that this day will be made a national holiday.

The old régime went utterly to pieces amidst the scorn and wrath of the people when they expressed their whole-hearted desire to attain to moral dignity and a recognition of their rights.

The powerful voices of two men—Enver Bey and Niazi Bey—echoed like thunder throughout the uttermost ends of Turkey, arousing in all breasts and at the same moment a wave of generous indignation, which led to some un-

fortunate acts, the setting right of which we will undertake.

These men, true heroes, were the worthy representatives of that army of Liberal Ottomans who for long years had been working at the Regeneration of their country, preparing for it a higher destiny. Their devotion to their purpose, their perseverance, their faith in a happier future, and their disinterestedness, were the characteristics which distinguished these martyrs to the new idea, these truly great patriots, the Young-Turks.

The triumph of liberal ideas—of ideas of *Justice*, of *Fraternity*, and of *Equality*—we owe to them, for it is they who, through their teaching—the true lever of all revolutions—the development of their mental powers, and the fine quality of their sentiments, have created and maintained this high movement for the social emancipation of their country, feeding it with the flame of their own convictions. It is education, then, the education of the people, which is to bring about the definite triumph of progress over ignorance, of civilisation over barbarism, and of morality over immorality. It is by education that we are to obtain the definite salvation of Turkey.

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The sufferings of the past should dictate to us our conduct for the future.

By this time we ought all of us to be cognisant of our duty.

Above everything, high above all personalities, whosoever they may be, whatsoever the rank they may occupy, or the influence they may possess, there is one thing that should dominate all, the interest of Turkey.

In the circumstances we find ourselves in at present, it is the duty of every patriot to consecrate his most devoted efforts and energies to the public welfare.

L'Union fait la force et le progrès, Unity makes strength and progress. This is the device that should be graven in our hearts, and should become the mainspring of all our actions. Cohesion and unity should be our chief national need, our governing principle.

Unity amongst the different races should make the strength Turkey needs so much. This should be to each and every one of us one of those primordial convictions instinct with life which it is quite superfluous to enlarge upon. We should feel it as we feel the need of breathing

or of eating. If we wish to live as a nation, in the first place, we must all of us, Christians, Moslems, Israelites, but Ottomans over and above everything else — we must be united amongst ourselves, making one homogeneous body.

We must ourselves discuss the general affairs of our own country ; we must all study them, each one according to his lights, for it is we who will have to conduct our own affairs in the future.

If the true friends of the people would go before and prepare a great era for our country, they should endeavour to find in the study of past ills a means of wiping them away for ever.

There are to-day two problems to be solved : the first of which involves the peace and welfare of the present ; and the second, all the hope for the future, or rather, the entire future.

Surface liberty is not enough for our country ; we must not persist in seeing liberty in what is merely political liberty, which never lives long if it be not supported throughout the length and breadth of the land by a complete system of strong liberal institutions. Furthermore, political freedom is not an end ; it is but a means of protecting and safeguarding all those things, the individual posses-

sion of which is indispensable to the expansion of the faculties and forces that are in man.

It is, therefore, essential that the ministers who are, or who will be, in power, and who will form the Provisional Government of Turkey until the time of the constitution of the Chambers, should possess high qualities of intellect, rectitude, devotion, and courage.

Let each one be free to express his mind openly ; above all, let care be taken of the moral and political education of the people, so that every Ottoman, every child of the country, that wishes to raise his voice, may be able to do so loudly and clearly.

And is not this a magnificent programme embodied in the admirable manifesto of the Liberal Ottomans ?

In view of the suddenness and the entirely pacific character of this remarkable revolution in Turkey the Young-Turks have won the unanimous sympathies of all civilised peoples, without exception, from the first, and no one taking the least interest in Turkey could look with indifference upon the new order of things established in a land so long and so bitterly tried by the hateful

Hamidian régime. To me especially, as a native of Asia Minor, there seemed to come a call to which I could not turn a deaf ear, a call to union and co-operation, addressed to us all by the manifestoes of the Liberal Ottomans ; neither could I refuse my aid, however feeble it may be, in the service of the public cause, with a view to the establishment and strengthening of new liberal institutions in Turkey.

It was in this spirit that I published in the *Monde Économique*, in Paris, on the 14th and 21st November last, the two following articles, which were immediately reproduced by several journals in Turkey and Greece :—

FIRST ARTICLE

“ The tyranny and despotism of the Moslem domination, so long as they were founded on force and arbitrary rule, with an absolute right over the life, the fortune, and the civic liberty of the conquered races, led to incessant revolt amongst the Christians against the intolerable yoke of the Sultans. The wrongs from which they suffered drove them irresistibly forward, and, thanks to their admirable communal organisation,

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of which I shall have more to say anon, the Greek communities especially had become the best school of freedom to take root in the land since the first days of the conquest.

“The miseries and sufferings to which Christians were exposed in Turkey often led to a general upheaval, and excessive social wrongs have more than once brought about the intervention of Russia and other Powers in favour of the oppressed.

“It is thus that, after long and sanguinary struggles, the independent States of modern Greece, Servia, Montenegro, and, latterly, Bulgaria have been formed.

“But it was left to the Hamidian régime, the most hateful of all on account of its horrors, to extend its tyranny to Mussulmans themselves. The very intensity of the evils from which they suffered during the last thirty years of the present reign ended by drawing the most enlightened and progressive Turks out of their moral abasement, and giving birth to the Young-Turk party, equipping them for the great revolution, fortunately a peaceful one, which has been accomplished by a handful of brave and intrepid men.

“The year 1908 will always be a glorious one

for the valiant artisans of this wonderful evolution, because it marks the moment in history when they, for the first time, took possession of themselves. But, after proclaiming the end of the old régime, after proclaiming the deliverance of the oppressed races and the era of a new social order based on justice, liberty, and respect for the rights of every one, care must be taken not to fall back into the errors of the past.

“The high ability and tireless perseverance displayed by the Young-Turks in directing the great revolution, prepared in mystery, and carried out with decision and moderation, should be a guarantee for the future, and ensure the success of liberal institutions.

“But to make to-day, out of the senile and moribund Turkey of yesterday, a State strong enough to live and be respected, it is not sufficient to shake off the yoke of absolutism and terror. In the first place, union and concord must be ensured between the divers elements which people the Ottoman Empire, for this is union that will make the strength of the Young-Turk party from the material, the intellectual, and the moral point of view. And we must try and cement this union, so

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as to make, if possible, one homogeneous whole out of all the peoples of the Empire.

“In speaking of such a union, we do not mean that all the Christians are to be inseparably bound to the Ottoman nation, nor that all the various nationalities are to be absorbed by one. This is a Utopia which is, unhappily, simmering in the brain of some nationalists excited to the point of fanaticism. That, indeed, were equivalent to demanding Islamism pure and simple *en bloc* for all the races representing the subjects of the Sultan, which would be a prodigious absurdity.

“When we speak of union among the scattered peoples of the Empire, we mean collaboration, mutual agreement between Christians and Moslems, an *entente* of religions, not an absorption of them under the supremacy of Islam. It is important that Utopians should know and understand, once for all, that if after the first movement towards justice and equality the new men in power should try to introduce a new régime *in their own interests alone, the struggle would begin again as fiercely as before*. It is not for a body of fanatical nationalists to force the supremacy of Pan-Islamism on Christians.

"The Young-Turks have, by their moderation, their wisdom, and their tact, won the sympathies and confidence of all civilised peoples and of the Christians in the East. They will keep them if they continue to act with sincerity and method in establishing and strengthening the new liberal régime, and if they allow capable and enlightened Christians a place in the administration and government of the country proportionate to their numbers, to their importance, and to their capability.

"The uncertainty which prevails concerning the fate and the future of the Ottoman Constitution more than ever requires the greatest circumspection on the part of the Government men. It is in their interest to make the country strong and respected, by securing peace, both externally and internally, and by promoting impartial justice and public safety in all the provinces. The new administration should devote itself unceasingly to bringing about perfect harmony between Christians and Moslems, and to avoid, above all things, in the administration of public justice, any cause of friction between elements of so divergent a nature already used to century-old antagonism.

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“This will not be the work of a day. But it is not impossible for any one possessing a true governing mind.

“Instead of that, what has been the case ever since the arrival of the Committee men in power ? We have sorrowfully witnessed the spectacle of arbitrary intervention for the purpose of cancelling elections made amongst Christians. Hence, discord and grave quarrels instead of unity of purpose.

“Under the liberal régime a spirit of toleration freed from egotism, coupled with real political wisdom, would have succeeded in vanquishing the conflicting sentiments which still exist between Christians and Moslems. It must be borne in mind that the Greeks particularly constitute and represent the chief element of progress and civilisation in Turkey ; and the distinguished director of the *Turquie Nouvelle* was right in saying, in an interview published in the *Monde Économique* in Athens on the 20th September :—

“ ‘ We know better than any one that the Greek element is the chief element of progress and civilisation in our country, and that *to attain our end we cannot do without it.* Greeks and Turks

should walk hand in hand and unite their efforts against the common enemy—the Bulgar. . . .’

“And indeed, none but the enemies of Turkey would have any interest in widening the breach between Turks and Greeks. Let those who are ruling at Constantinople beware of the bait held out by those who would, as usual, fish in troubled waters.

“Unhappily, it would appear that the spirit of toleration is entirely absent from the ruling centre at Constantinople as regards the Greeks of the Empire. And this is a grave flaw, for the salvation of Turkey depends on nothing more than on the application of the representative system in a loyal and sincere manner, founded on the union, agreement, and co-operation of Turk with Christian.

“I say *the application of the representative system*, and not the immediate introduction into Turkey of a whole parliamentary paraphernalia, copied from Western parliamentarianism, on the principle of *universal suffrage*, applied to quite primitive Asiatic peoples, or nomad hordes.

“What we want in Turkey, what we need, is above everything to separate the State from the Theo-

cratic power, that is to say, the political authority of the Khalifate, by secularising the ruling power.

“In other words, it is important that the Government be entrusted to an effective National Assembly, worth the name, founded on a temperate representative principle. This first assembly should likewise be a constitutional assembly, with power to revise the Constitution of 1876, and to supply what it lacks according to the needs of the country. Its members should consist of the most enlightened men of the Empire, elected by the departmental Councils of the *Vilayets*; their number should be strictly proportionate to the figures of the population of each nationality.

“The executive power, exercised by responsible ministers, under the control of this national representative body, until the time of the meeting of the new Parliament at a date yet to be determined—say, within two or three years—would naturally be under the authority of the Sultan, who would preserve his right to veto.

“It must not be forgotten that both by nature and by tradition the different races which form the Ottoman Empire are, generally speaking, essentially equalitarian and democratic, recognising

no authority but that which talent or ability confers, so that the principle of national representation, as originally conceived in the organisation of Christian communities in the East, is not therefore unknown to them.

“These communal institutions, the purpose of which, from the first, has been to direct the affairs of each community in Turkey, form a kind of constitution, quite independent of the political government.

“At the outset of their victory the Turks, it is true, overthrew the institutions and customs of the hierarchy in the Byzantine Empire, but they did not force their own administrative forms nor their religious laws upon their tributaries. Therefore, the municipal institutions of the *Rayas* have remained independent of the Moslem code to such an extent that, wheresoever prosperity of a relative kind has developed, it may be remarked that there has been complete absence of political relations with the Porte.

“Furthermore, does not the ceremony of girding on the sabre at the Eyoub Mosque constitute in itself a periodical consecration of the sovereignty of the Sultans—in the name of the Turkish people

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—elective in principle? This sovereignty has indeed become hereditary, but the Sultans nevertheless recognise the right of the people by submitting, on ascending the throne, to the solemn formality which I have just referred to.

“ In the beginning the Khalifs ruled the people paternally ; they were always acquainted with the wishes of the latter, and suffered their effective control. Later on the Sultanate became absolute, but it was represented by such famous men as Bajazet, Mohammed, Selim, Soliman, and Mahmoud. Nevertheless the power was only absolute in theory, for the Sultans were surrounded by eminent men, whose advice they followed, and who guided them with their knowledge and patriotism. It was thus that the Ottoman Empire realised incalculable conquests, spread from the Persian Gulf to the Adriatic, conquered Egypt, the African sea-board, the islands of the Mediterranean, and stretched out as far as the Pruth. Even after the reverse which they suffered under the walls of Vienna, and after the ill-fated campaigns against Prince Eugène, Russia, and Napoleon, Turkey yet remained a power to be reckoned with.

“ The system followed by so many illustrious

Sultans was continued in our own times by the Sultans Medjid, Aziz, and Mourad ; that is to say, they recognised the necessary counterweight of the Porte and the legitimate authority of such men as Rechid, Aali, Fuad, Mehmed, Ruchdi, Hussein, Avni, and Midhat. Every one will remember that all great questions, whether of internal or foreign policy, were dealt with by these men, several of whom very brilliantly represented their sovereign at European Councils. Moreover, their position and influence were so little questioned by their masters, that some of the most important functionaries at the Palace, such as First Secretary, Grand Chamberlain, &c., were appointed by the Porte, and by it replaced if not satisfied with them. In this connection I would recall the fact that the Sultan Mourad, wishing to make a personal friend of his First Secretary, the Grand Vizier thrust Saadoulach Pasha upon him. It was to this circumstance that the unfortunate functionary, suspected of being Mourad's friend, owed the fact of his being exiled to the embassy in Berlin and afterwards in Vienna, where, not being able to obtain leave to go and see his family after sixteen years of absence, he committed suicide.

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“The Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid, setting aside the high example of his glorious predecessors, preferred to break with tradition many centuries old and centralise all the governing power at the Yildiz-Kiosk. This lamentable policy was adopted after the Sultan had solemnly promised, by an imperial Hatt, to observe and maintain the Constitution of 1876. Shortly after this he dismissed Said, Khairedin, and Kiamil from power, because they had attempted to revive the despised authority of the Porte.

“In the present day none but the enemies of Turkey would have any interest in trying to bring discredit upon the representative régime, and to prevent its being put into operation.”

SECOND ARTICLE

“Having surveyed the evils of the old system, it is now time to start to work seriously to reform it. To this end there is every inducement to rally round the representative power in a disinterested and loyal spirit, and to associate oneself with those principles of order and liberty which should in future become the common standard of all. The liberal régime is worthy (so high is its

aim) of drawing together the men of all nationalities and all parties.

“Those who, owing to their convictions, doubts, or prejudices, are instinctively inclined to repel the new form of régime should make an effort to look with favour on the trial, so that they may be in a position to judge of the value of it ; for, if Turkey is to remain an Empire, and not fall into absolute dissolution, she urgently needs re-casting. Her future depends entirely on this.

“But, let not my fellow-countrymen, the Young-Turks, imagine that *the trial of the liberal system consists simply in proclaiming the idea*. It consists, on the contrary, in founding and testing the true liberal institutions. And to establish these it requires the calm which time alone brings, the support of thinking minds, and the confidence of the country. The chief thing is to feel oneself in possession of a favourable point of departure, for if *one sets out badly at the beginning*—and, unhappily, that is what is being done—worse vicissitudes may befall one later on.

“That is why, to ensure the regular working and the progress of new institutions, it is im-

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perative that the society where they are to be established should not in itself offer an obstacle to their operation. In the first place, the Turkish people themselves should prove that they are fit to enjoy a liberal régime. It were indeed absurd to offer them a system of government based on principles of equity, liberty, and honesty if they intend to allow a few privileged persons to seize the power and to continue in all the vices of the past.

“It is necessary, on the contrary, that men of all ranks should accept the new order of things, sacrificing to it and to the firm establishment thereof their own ideas, traditions, preferences, passions, and even perhaps interests.

“Most especially does it behove the men of the Government to found a new order of things on honest and moral bases, and to arrive at this they must set the example in patriotism ; they must forego all personal ambition in the general interests of the Empire ; they must, in other words, possess indomitable energy to cleanse the old edifice of its blind traditions, its unreasoning prejudices, and inveterate habits. The Government men must actively devote all their energies

to the task of rendering to the country the highest sum-total of service. They must, above everything, avoid anarchy in administration, for that is what most inevitably leads nations into an abyss from which they are never able to emerge, and which makes them all the more readily fall a prey to that form of foreign intervention to which Turkey precisely owes her dismemberment ; for, strange to relate, every time foreign diplomacy has intervened for the purpose of *guaranteeing the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire*, she has suffered the loss of some provinces of more or less importance.

“We must cherish no illusions. If the form of the old régime has been changed, nevertheless false appearances and human passions still prevail ; fundamentally it is still the same ; all the errors, the traditions, and the unjust methods of the old system in regard to the Christian part of the population unhappily continue to subsist. Of course the work of reconstruction cannot be accomplished from one day to another, but the problem should be recognised by the new political men, who should be prepared to strike resolutely at the root of all that is wrong. Otherwise, they will soon develop the vices which they disapproved

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of in the absolutism and tyranny of the Yildiz-Kiosk, offering to the civilised world the spectacle of abuse of arbitrary power.

“Until the liberal system which is in process of being formed has established its constitution, everything may be feared. Existence itself, at any rate in Turkey in Europe, is in danger owing to the insatiable greed of ambitious neighbours, ready to take advantage of the first symptoms of anarchy which must inevitably follow upon any failure of the liberal system ; for it were vain to disguise the fact that the promulgation of a constitution in the Ottoman Empire is not a matter of satisfaction to all the Powers, more particularly to those who have no interest in seeing Turkey emancipate herself so soon from their eternal guardianship, and rise politically and economically by her own efforts and national strength.

“M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, the distinguished director of the *Économiste Français*, has just confirmed our fears in this respect, saying on the 10th October, in his journal, the wide influence of which is well known :—

“ ‘ In the three articles which we recently devoted

to the Turkish revolution and to the consideration of the divers consequences which it might have . . . we expressed regret that the Powers had not, long since, authorised Bulgaria to declare her independence and to become a kingdom, and likewise Greece to annex Crete.

“ ‘ In the interests of Turkey regenerate or about to become regenerate, as well as in the interests of the Christian population and of the Empire, it were better that New Turkey be definitely released from all cause of embarrassment and trouble.

“ ‘ It is nevertheless much to be feared that the Bulgar element in Macedonia will suffer from the influence of Bulgaria, now aggrandised by her independence and erection into a kingdom, and that, after having adhered to the “ Young-Turk ” movement at first, this Bulgar element may make a change of front and revert to the original idea of emancipation.

“ ‘ *Another danger too,*’—I am still quoting from the eminent economist, M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu—‘ is that certain of the Powers, *seeing that a fresh dismemberment of Turkey in Europe is preparing, may have their covetousness roused and claim certain compensations,* which would aggravate the imbroglio

and make an inextricable tangle of it.' And the distinguished economist concludes :—

“ ‘ It is to the best interest and advantage of the Young-Turks, if one consider both present and future, to concentrate Turkey within her actual present possessions, instead of letting her waste herself in the pursuit of those possessions which she has lost and can never recover. They might, on the contrary, were they to succeed in establishing harmony between Christians and Moham-medans, aspire gradually to free themselves from the manifold fetters by which the Ottoman Empire is hampered at present.’ ”

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It is easy to understand that a liberal system succeeding an absolute monarchical rule finds its path strewn with difficulties at the beginning.

These difficulties have their source in several essential causes, the chief of which are :—

1. The people in whose midst the constitutional system is now proclaimed, were born and bred under the terrorist rule of the monarchy, and have not yet shaken off the atmosphere created by it. They are still what that monarchy made them. Their habits, customs, and inclinations are still

imbued with the monarchical spirit, and the best-intentioned men, in spite of themselves, are still under the influence of the monarchical environment in which they have always lived. The form of government changed in a day. It will require at least one generation to change the individual character.

2. Whilst changing the form of government we still retain the governmental machinery of laws, institutions, procedures, and practices created by the monarchy, and to which we are so accustomed that we continue to apply it under a new title, without even noticing that it is inconsistent with the liberal spirit. The new men, moreover, who have just taken over the power—this is within the pale of human weakness—through love of the power momentarily placed in their hands, are led to the abuse of it to the extent of not hastening to relinquish certain privileges of the former monarchical rule, which they are now enjoying, and which they find it convenient to preserve for their own ends.

It will be seen that in this manner the centralisation of power is making itself permanent, because the new Liberal Government fear a decrease in power should they abandon certain

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prerogatives transmitted to them by the monarchy. Consequently the central power has the arbitrary disposal of a multitude of posts, and holds the administrative departments in complete dependence and under their constant supervision. And this holding of the communes under surveillance, this arbitrary disposal of public appointments (both the invention of tyranny), are the greatest obstacles to progress, to systematic work, and to the foundation of liberal and democratic institutions, to which end it is important that narrow views and self-seeking interests should give way for the benefit of public weal.

But where are the men to make a clean sweep of the imperfections of the old system? Where are the men possessing at once the liberal-mindedness, the uprightness, the clear-headedness, the enlightenment, and the disinterestedness to rise to the level of so high a task, concerning the practical difficulties of which there can be no illusion?

This, then, is the reason why the national assembly, of which I spoke in the preceding article, requires to proceed with great judgment in the selection of men of known integrity, aptitude, and high ability. For the task to be taken in hand

is one requiring men of a superior stamp. It is during this period of travail, after the enthusiasm of the first days is over, when inexperience, indecision, errors of principle, and other faults begin to cloud our minds with hesitation, that we should show that our trust in the liberal system is above such vicissitudes, and should help the peoples of the Empire to preserve that moral fortitude which is the necessary starting-point of all new institutions.

Those Utopian persons who have been led to believe in the possibility of the Christian population being absorbed by Islamism are grievously mistaken in looking upon the former as an agglomeration of beings of a nature inferior to their own. They will have to learn the great lesson of experience, so many centuries old, which teaches them, over and above all other things, to look upon public welfare as their highest aim, as well as the reason for their own existence.

A wise Government can change radically and for good both the habits and the condition of the whole body of the nation, and the latter, if it be in a position to understand its high mission, will doubtless supply the moral qualities necessary to accomplish the task.

CHAPTER III

BLUNDER AFTER BLUNDER

SINCE the publication of the foregoing articles I have unfortunately had to abandon many of my illusions as to the possibility of establishing a constitutional régime in Turkey just yet, for of the very rough and hastily constructed scaffolding, and of the fine promises of Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, not even the name remains now. On the contrary, the very worst practices and abuses of the old terrorist system have been only too glaringly evident in Constantinople and throughout the whole of the Ottoman Empire since the so-called Regeneration of Turkey.

It is common knowledge that on the very morrow of the proclamation of the Constitution the first elections were arbitrarily cancelled by the Committees of Young-Turks, because, under the influence of the first feeling of enthusiasm, and guided by a certain amount of toleration and

impartiality, they had produced results that were very favourable to the Christians. The scandalous and incredible violence which distinguished the intervention of local authorities in the elections naturally gave birth to a feeling of astonishment and profound discouragement amongst the Christian population. So great is their discouragement, indeed, that they are anxiously asking themselves whether, after all, they have not cause to regret the old régime when absolutism and arbitrary rule held sway, and when at least the privileges of their communal institutions, founded upon the representative régime, were respected for centuries, and no Sultan ever attempted to interfere with the free exercise of any of them. In view of the vexatious manœuvres of the Young-Turks, who came on the scene claiming to put an end to all the wrongs of the mournful past, what confidence can Christians feel in the Constitution of 1908? In what does it differ from the comedy of 1876?

In defiance of the most legitimate and strongest protests on the part of the Christians against such abuses the Neo-Turk Committees ordered fresh elections, on the basis this time of lists of candidates prepared by Committees of nationalist fanatics,

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to the exclusion of candidates of the liberal party, which, unhappily, represents but a small minority in the country. Therefore, what took place was not a free election, but simply a nomination of deputies by the directing Committees. From such arbitrary and vexatious acts nothing but dissatisfaction, lassitude, and monarchical reaction could come amongst those whose convictions were only lukewarm, as well as trouble of a material and moral nature.

The descendants of the brave and puissant conquerors, of whom we have already spoken previously, the Nationalists of the Young-Turk party of our day, present a curious phenomenon of degeneracy. The aforesaid Sultans have left a progeny whose acts and work would appear to bear the stamp of braggadocio which accords strangely with the glorious exploits of their ancestors. The decrees made by the great Ottoman statesmen of the past, so justly famed for their broad-mindedness, have in the present day degenerated into mere opportunism, not even preserving, in these memorable days of the *Regeneration of Turkey*, so much as the semblance of dignity which distinguished the great men of the East in the past.

The hidden governing Committee of Young-Turks, who continue, without any responsibility whatsoever, to rule the destinies of the Empire in their own fashion, direct the foreign policy of their country in relation to their neighbours no longer according to the real interests of the State, but according to the degree of fear which these neighbours inspire in them.

Therefore, whilst the fear of having to face the Bulgar bayonets, for instance, has inspired the language and attitude of these brave Nationalists the Young-Turks, as shown in their humble "Temenas" and ostentatious genuflexions before them, on the other hand, nothing can equal their arrogance and ridiculous rodomontade in regard to Greece, which they consider as a very negligible quantity.

After the very grave events of our own day, such as the audacious seizure of Eastern Roumelia by vassal Bulgaria, the quite recent confiscation of the eastern railways, and the proclamation of independence by Bulgaria, every one expected a legitimate explosion of indignation on the part of the Neo-Turk Nationalists, even were it only platonic, and a patriotic protest inspired on the

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lines of the most elementary Oriental dignity. But, quite on the contrary, most pressing requests were addressed to all the Turkish journals by the Committees, urging them to use the utmost circumspection and moderation in referring to the events in Bulgaria ; and the Young-Turk journals themselves showed not merely moderation, but the most cringing humility, hardly daring to criticise the fact for fear of provoking a declaration of war on the part of vassal Bulgaria against Turkey. Whilst with regard to Greece, who, during the Cretan movement, preserved an admirable attitude towards Turkey, these self-same Committees, with the consent of the Ottoman Government itself, gave expression to sentiments of so quixotic and grossly insulting a nature as to make a repetition of the Etem Pasha incident in Thessaly imminent.

Aferim Effendiler !

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In comparing the results obtained during the last five centuries with the policy inaugurated after the coming to the throne of the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid II., surnamed by sycophants the *Victorious*, we find that the present-day descendants

of so many illustrious and powerful monarchs of the Ottoman Empire have ingloriously lost, within the space of the last thirty years, Bulgaria, Dobroudja, Eastern Roumelia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the territories annexed to Servia and Montenegro, Thessaly, Cyprus, Batoum, Kars, Egypt, Tunis, &c. &c., over all of which countries Turkey had more or less effective rights of sovereignty. Notwithstanding, none of these amputations appear to have so much as touched either the skin or even the national vanity, of which the contemporary Nationalists are so sensitive. It was stated that the suppression in Crete of the last vestige of so-called Turkish sovereignty should have sufficed to remind all the ardent patriots on the Committees that this splendid island was once part of the Moslem dominion. What a show of words!

In their blindness and excitement they cannot see the trap being spread out for them by the clever and dangerous intriguers whose purpose it is to draw their attention away from the Bulgarian and Austrian question and to turn it towards the Cretan chimera, which, after all, is of little interest to Turkey. In their thoughtless chauvinism they

do not perceive that they are rendering the worst possible service to the liberal system of their country by their unjustifiable attacks on Greeks in general. Pursuing such insensate and unpatriotic tactics they unhappily do nothing but divide Turks and Greeks, and the result will be that the Christians in Turkey will end by losing all confidence in and attachment to the Ottoman Constitution.

It is these heralds of peace and apostles of *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*, the Young-Turks themselves, who have dealt the worst blow to their still-born charter, thus rivalling the most shameful methods of the old régime which they claim to have abolished. These peculiar patriots and liberals seem to fancy that the carrying out of the liberal system consists simply in the proclamation of the idea and in the seizure of power by a few daring spirits, more evilly-inclined even than the sinister personages of unhappy memory who formerly lived amidst the vices and corruption of the Yildiz-Kiosk.

Up to the present we cannot see that anything is changed in Turkey except the form of the old system. There is nothing but sham on the surface

everywhere, whilst savage hatred against the Christians of the Empire rages underneath.

The Young-Turks have crushed the all-powerfulness of the Yildiz-Kiosk indeed, but, once the power having passed into the hands of the Committees, the latter have allowed all the methods of the Hamidian régime to subsist, with all their customs and traditions, from which the liberal Young-Turks were the first to suffer before the revolution. Since then the peoples of the Empire, instead of having one enemy to combat in common, find themselves isolated, and ranged against them are the creatures of the Committees, their self-styled liberators, with whom (we are assured) the rank and file of the former Yildiz-Kiosk have now joined hands.

The Committees of Young-Turks have shown lack of sincerity and of good faith.

Step by step these Neo-Turks have arrived, in their inconceivable intolerance, at almost open war with the Christians, and most especially with the Greeks. From their first error, which had its starting-point in the violation of the constitutional charter, an act which was communicated to the foreign papers by the correspondents of the most

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distinguished papers in Turkey, these Asiatic liberals have gone to the recent tumultuous demonstrations and absurd intrigues against the Greeks in general, taking as their pretext the scheme of the great Powers to annex Crete to Greece, and threatening to boycott Greek trade in Turkey.

A strange conception indeed of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity! So strange is it that one is almost led to believe that these madmen, armed with the torch of discord and hatred of all the races which people the Ottoman Empire, are no longer Young-Turks moved by love of their country, but rather incendiaries of common justice, the unconscious and not altogether disinterested instruments and agents acting under the direction of a foreign enemy of liberal Turkey.

The enemies of liberal Turkey single out the Greeks, not only because they are, numerically speaking, after the Turks the dominant nationality in the Empire, representing a third of the population; not only because, from the moral and intellectual, as well as the active and economical, point of view, they are above all the other races, but because during the dark centuries of tyranny

they were the only ones able to preserve institutions essentially democratic in their ecclesiastic and communal administration (it will suffice here to recall the fact that the very regulations by virtue of which the Great Church in Constantinople and the Greek communities in Turkey are ruled bear the name of *Constitution*), in short, it is because the Greeks are the only race capable of consolidating liberal institutions in Turkey and forming a political system, were they allowed to co-operate with the Turks on equitable terms, in the regular working of the new system. The fanatical Nationalists and the chauvinistic Neo-Turks are under a great delusion if they imagine that they alone are capable of holding their own against the enemy without the brotherly aid of the Greek. They would be crushed the moment the adversaries of the new system in Turkey discovered that the Greeks were not with them. It is indeed inconceivable that the Young-Turk party should misjudge things to such an extent.

So long as these insensate demonstrations on the part of a few fanatical ringleaders against the Greeks have no more effect than to amuse the taciturn and dreamy customers of the Turkish cafés of

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Eyoub and Tachta-Kalé in Constantinople, and do not occur in Parliament, except in so far as the inept and idle attacks of the reporter of the *Tantın* journal are concerned, the situation does not appear to be fraught with danger ; these demonstrations are merely imprudent, and can only bring harm to constitutional Turkey herself, and therefore, however vexatious they may be, it is best not to attach to the episode an importance which it does not possess. But, should this systematic excitement against the Christians begin to take on a malignant complexion, and threaten to extend to some of the men in power, who might see in it an opportunity of re-capturing their lost popularity, so glaring an act of political bungling could not be allowed to pass unnoticed ; it would forthwith call down the censure of all the Greek people in Turkey, and would end by rousing their brethren in the Hellenic kingdom, who were nevertheless the first, at the time of the proclamation of the Constitution in Turkey, both by word and deed, and with an almost too simple honesty and good faith, to declare themselves in favour of the success and stability of the work so admirably

directed at its commencement by the Young-Turks.

The Neo-Turk Nationalists would seem to have forgotten that the fall of the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid from absolute power was due to abuses, oppression, and tyranny. They are most particularly wrong in forgetting that the Christians too may turn at bay, as the Young-Turks themselves did more than once during the intolerable Hamidian system.

Whilst deploring and condemning all popular excess, we consider that it is the duty of the Government not to do anything to irritate the mob, but rather to prevent them being carried to that pitch of excitement when reason no longer holds sway and violence alone settles a situation. The wisdom of the governors alone can maintain order amongst the governed.

CHAPTER IV

THE CRETAN QUESTION

WHAT sense is there, for instance, in the noisy clamourings of an excited populace, led by fanatical ringleaders through the streets of Constantinople and elsewhere, against the annexation of Crete by Greece, and the threat to rain interpellations in Parliament? Whom do they think to impose upon with the ridiculous rodomontade of a few pavement bravos in a question which it is exclusively the province of the great Powers to settle? Does Crete belong to Turkey in the present day? Has there been any vestige of Turkish authority there for the last ten years? Does the latter exercise any authority there outside the legal will of the four great Powers, whose will alone rules the island in virtue of the charter of freedom conceded and decreed by the self-same Powers? And since it is the great Powers that govern there as absolute masters, and seeing,

moreover, that the system in operation there is quite other than the Turkish rule, who is going to prevent the European Areopagus, if such be their will, from sooner or later removing the last obstacle, which is purely one of form, in the way of a definite annexation of the island by the mother-country, seeing that it is indisputable that the Cretan people won and recovered their freedom long ago, not by favour from any one whatsoever, but at the price of long and victorious struggles with Turkey ?

What would the Young-Turks say if the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid were to attempt to bring Turkey back under the detestable yoke of the old régime of the Yildiz-Kiosk ?

From the point of view of the fortunes of war—this is an undeniable historical fact—in all the struggles against the Moslem dominion the vanquished party in Crete has always been the Turkish army, and Turkey has invariably been compelled to capitulate with the Cretans to establish peace in the island, if only temporarily. But what really kept Crete under Turkish rule until 1898 was the will of official Europe on account of political rivalry between the Powers,

and not military superiority on the part of Turkey, for, as far as that was concerned, the Turkish forces were always crushed in Crete.

Consequently the ridiculous meetings of the noisy Nationalists on the Committees, not having the power to materially modify by one iota the wise decrees of the European Areopagus, can do nothing but arouse feelings of discord and hatred between Greeks and Turks. But who could be so blind as not to see that were such a conflagration to take place between races inhabiting the same country the structure of the new institutions itself would run the risk of being reduced to cinders, and that the very being of the Ottoman State would be fatally compromised, because such an event would inevitably awaken the insatiable appetites always lying latent in ambitious neighbours, ever ready to profit by the first intestine struggles which may occur between Turks and Christians?

We cannot too often remind the Young-Turks of the sapient words of M. Leroy - Beaulieu, which we quoted further back in Chapter II., as follows:—

“It is to the best interest and advantage of

the Young-Turks, if one consider both present and future, to concentrate Turkey within her actual present possessions, instead of letting her waste herself in the pursuit of those possessions which she has lost and can never recover."

We believe that, in the supreme interests of the Ottoman Empire, an immediate return to a closer understanding and a more sincere co-operation with the Christians is of the utmost importance. It therefore behoves all sensible and intelligent lovers of their country, as well as all the enlightened Government men in new Turkey, such men as fortunately can be found in governmental spheres, in Parliament, in the Senate, and in all those centres where Liberal Ottomans congregate, to work without ceasing for the welfare and regeneration of Turkey, basing themselves solely on the union of all, Turks and Christians, rallying round those principles of order and liberty which should constitute the common standard of all Ottomans. Returning to a saner mood, the Neo-Turk Nationalists will understand that no lasting work can be founded on violence and grotesque threats.

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Crete no longer is, and never again will be, even nominally, a Turkish possession. History has closed that chapter for ever, and the Cretan struggle will never be reopened. Moreover, do not the Nationalist Committees know, for instance, that for some years now, according to an Imperial Iradé, all goods coming from the island of Crete have been subject to the same duties as foreign goods, which proves that the Imperial Ottoman Government itself considers Crete as a foreign country ?

The more its annexation to Greece is hastened, the more will Turkey profit thereby, for this would disperse the cloud which is hanging so unpleasantly again over the relations between Greeks and Turks. This is what every impartial man who is the true friend of Turkey should counsel the Young-Turks, and the latter should never forget that the new liberal régime cannot possess stability, nor become an instrument of progress and prosperity, except on condition that there be frank and loyal co-operation, free from ill-feeling, between Turks and Christians.

Before his fall the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, speaking more or less in this strain to the repre-

sentative of the *Matin* in Constantinople on New Year's Day, very justly and wisely said :—

“You may tell the *Matin* that I am surrounded by great patriots. The Ministry is composed of talented men. The Chamber? You are aware of their sentiments. All will unite their efforts. And we too will live the life of a free people; we also shall have our part in the fruits of civilisation. We shall constitute a force which we will place at the service of *Right, Justice, and Humanity*. We will follow in the footsteps of France, and like her, within our own special domain of Islam, we will teach the *brotherhood of peoples* and respect for the *Rights of others*.”

These are indeed words of wisdom, divinely so. But how is one to reconcile a proclamation of such great principles on the part of one of the most eminent and most respected contemporary statesmen in Turkey with the acts of the provocative and irresponsible agents of the Committees? The recent unconstitutional conduct of the *Union and Progress* proved that the power has completely slipped through the hands of the regular Government of the country and is in the hands of Prætorians, who, at the present

moment, are irresponsibly ruling in Turkey, forcing the men of their own choice on a Parliament only too docile to their will.

That being the case, why should not the Sultan and the Parliament hand over the reins to these ringleaders, in order that they may apply, under their own direct responsibility, this strange programme of an abortive constitutional system such as they conceive it to be ?

History teaches us, nevertheless, that wherever it has seen the light chauvinism has always, without exception, brought misfortune, and has constituted the greatest danger to the country. And it is unhappily one of these phases that Turkish chauvinism runs the risk of substituting in Turkey for the enlightened and sensible patriotism of the true Young-Turks, who, at the commencement, astonished the civilised world by their wisdom, their moderation, and their eminently political spirit.

CHAPTER V

CHAUVINISM AND NATIONALISM

It is hardly worth our while to pay much attention to the absurdities of a certain section of the Neo-Turk Nationalist press, either when it claims to set aside the gravest decrees of the great Powers in regard to the independence of Crete, or when it brings forward the Nationalist programme of the Committees, the outcome of which would be the *Ottomanisation*, if not the *Islamisation*, of the Christians, notably of the Greeks, in Turkey.

At the anti-Cretan meetings which have taken place at the hippodrome at Stamboul the responsible press of all nations has already replied suitably. In the foregoing chapter we have, moreover, stated what we think in this respect.

As to the dream caressed by the fanatical Neo-Turk Nationalists, of setting to work to absorb the Christians or to stifle Hellenism by

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the complete Ottomanisation of the Christians in the Empire, the history of the last few centuries is a sufficient reply to these Utopians.

One must, indeed, be absolutely ignorant of history to believe that that which an absolute theocratic and all-powerful rule lasting several centuries was not able to realise, or even to attempt to put into practice, a few Utopians of the Neo-Turk Nationalist party will be able to do to-day in the full swing of the twentieth century. To think of such a thing alone is to give proof of utter ignorance of the history of their country, which tells us that at the commencement of the Moslem dominion the Greek language on several occasions was used by the great and powerful Sultans and Khalifs as the *official* language of the Ottoman State.

It was, in effect, by a missive written in the Greek language that the Sultan Bajazet II., in 1481, announced his coming to the throne to the Doge of Venice. It was likewise in Greek that, at the same period, the treaty of peace concluded between Venice and the Sublime Porte was drawn up. The deed giving up Zante to the Venetians in 1485, by the same Sultan Bajazet,

as well as another document addressed, in 1499, to the Doge Augustino Barbarigo, a third one addressed, in 1500, to the Doge Leonardo Lore-dano, and yet another to the same, in 1502, were all written in Greek. Another treaty, a very long one, of the same epoch, concluded by the Sultan Bajazet with the Doge of Venice, and drawn up in the Greek language, is, like so many other documents relating to the years 1502-1504, in the archives at Venice. The archives of Malta also contain a great portion of the correspondence between this same Sultan and the Knights of Rhodes and other persons in authority at that time.

Not only was the highly oppressive tyranny of the first great conquerors quite unable to loosen a single stone of the grand Hellenic edifice, but, quite on the contrary, every attempt at violence and persecution directed against it only served to strengthen and uplift the national sentiment of the Greeks increasingly, until the day when at last, in 1821, there came a spark of light which opened out into a perspective of freedom, not only for Christians, without distinction of race, suffering under the intolerable

yoke of Moslem tyranny, but also to the Young-Turks themselves, who have just recently overthrown the absolutism and despotism of the past.

What is one to think after that of the liberals on the Neo-Turk Committees who intend to replace the teaching in the Greek schools by the Turkish language, when Greek is always compulsory in all schools throughout the universe ?

No one shall dare touch the communal franchise granted to the Christians by the first conquerors, and respected ever since by all the Khalifs and Sultans. No one will touch it, most particularly for the simple reason that the Turkish language, being nothing but a curious mosaic of Arab, Persian, and Tartar words, is quite incapable of serving as an instrument for any kind of suitable education whatsoever. For that very reason the Turkish youth who wishes to acquire a higher form of education more in accordance with modern ideas is forced to attend schools abroad, whence have come the most notable members of the liberal party.

The Nationalists and the hangers-on of the new rule, attached to the Committees, and the editors

of the *Tanin* and such-like, would do well, meanwhile, to make less noise over the bone which, by a miracle, has fallen into their jaws, thanks to the supreme efforts and the incalculable sacrifices of the true liberal Turks, now evicted by their audacity. It is to their interest not to bring home too keenly to the Christians of the Empire and of Europe that they are the most mischief-making elements of the new system, and the declared enemies of civilisation and progress.

CHAPTER VI

THE TEACHING IN THE GREEK COMMUNAL SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

AMONGST those peoples where public education is most widely spread the Greek people have always, without question, occupied a prominent rank. The greed of knowledge amongst the rank and file of the Greek is incredible as compared with the other peoples of the Levant. The importance of the subject forces me to refer frequently to the testimony and the opinion of distinguished writers whose observations constitute an authority on the races peopling the Ottoman Empire. In speaking, moreover, of the Hellenic people it were difficult for me to forget my origin and to make abstraction of all spirit of nationality. And therefore I need more than ever to have recourse to the authorities on history whose opinions I shall limit myself to interpreting.

The tyranny of the Turks has crushed the

Hellenes from the point of politics ; but, what was worse, the corruption of customs of the Byzantine period and, in a great measure, the profound apathy and inertia of the Turks had become, so to speak, incorporated in the Greek people. An insurrection would not have been sufficient to rid them of this burden, the pitiful result of several centuries of oppression ; it was a case, if one wished to succeed, of one calling into activity all the intellectual and moral forces of the nation, and making use of all its resources. Neither the Church, nor the Republicans, nor French Imperialists, nor Italian Carbonari, their efforts notwithstanding, were to bring freedom to the Hellenes.

The merit of having been the first to arouse them from their lethargy and torpor belongs to the prominent members of the Phanariote families and a few other intellectual notabilities of the Hellenic nation. It was most particularly at the beginning of the eighteenth century that these great patriots commenced seriously to give the first impulse to a new intellectual life, which spread not only to the Phanariotes, but also to the scientific circles of Greece, and was the means of carrying light for

the first time into the dense gloom which reigned over the length and breadth of the Ottoman possessions.

“It was,” says G.-G. Gervinus, the author of *L'Histoire du XIX^e Siècle*, “according to the classic Macchiavellian point of view, a return *al segno* to the point of departure, to the primitive source whence sprang the ancient Greeks ; it was the laying of the most solid foundation-stone for the reconstruction of the edifice, when, following upon the first impulsion, they made the ancient Hellenic language, which is the noblest means of instruction, and one which in this instance was admirably prepared for use, the chief vehicle of all scholastic instruction.”

It is true that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Greek language had been taught in a few scientific schools in Constantinople, Chios, Janina, &c. ; but this was only with a view to preparing young ecclesiastics, and even amongst the priests the knowledge of the Hellenic language was restricted to so small a circle that Tournefort, in his *Voyage dans le Levant*, in 1717, could say that there were not twelve persons in the country knowing the language. But when at Phanar a

certain value began to be attached to the improvement of the Raomaïc tongue (vulgar Greek) the Hellenic language began to be taught in a more general way and throughout a more extensive circle, in the new schools founded by Alexander Mavrocardato in Constantinople and the priest Makarios at Patmos. This resurrection alone of the ancient language gave rise to a feeling of brotherhood and national unity amongst the dispersed members of the nation. The Neo-Greek literature, which for more than three centuries had dealt with none but theological subjects, now commenced to deal with philology and applied sciences ; and the language, disfigured in ecclesiastical literature by an inflated style and by *xenisms* (the introduction of foreign words), now commenced to develop in an original manner, which contrasted singularly with its former state.

In 1774 the signing of the treaty of Kutjuk-Kainardjik between Russia and the Porte led to the happy consequence of improving, in an indirect way, the state of the Christians in the East. Since this treaty Europe has witnessed the spectacle of a literary movement perhaps unique in history.

"In general," says M. Gordon, "the advance of knowledge is slow and gradual, but amongst the Greek people it is more like a sudden explosion ; it has been almost miraculous, a revolution of ideas which contrasts singularly with the phlegmatic and patient immobility of the other *rayas*. Schools, colleges, libraries are springing up on all sides."

There was already at that time a certain number of small schools, which very soon multiplied. In Asia Minor a town was formed in a few years on the northern extremity of the Gulf of Smyrna. A simple monk, named Œconomos, became later on the most eminent Greek orator of his day, and by force of insinuation, prayers, and "that will of a good man which often succeeds in overcoming everything," he finally obtained from the Porte the removal of Moslems from his little village of Avaïli, and the erection of this village into an independent municipality under the name of Cydonia.

"An elegant town arose forthwith," writes M. Villemain, "from the ruins of the poor village ; numerous churches adorned it ; manufactures little known in the East carried thither the arts of Europe, and Cydonia, placed, as it is, under a

clear sky and on the borders of the sea, was embellished by freedom and wealth."

M. Brunet of Presles, on his side, speaking of this small village, writes :—

"The population at once increased tenfold, the town was enriched with monuments and elegant habitations, trade bringing much wealth into it."

M. Pourqueville visited Cydonia in 1817, and found it so flourishing that, in speaking of it later on, he was profuse in praise of it, admiring the spirit of philanthropy prevailing there, and the free education accompanied by generous subsidies distributed amongst the students.

This writer remembered with pleasure, he said, the evenings he had spent in Cydonia studying the ancient authors with some of the students, whilst others were engaged in preparing representations from ancient tragedies. The college had then three hundred students ; it was prospering, it contained great literary treasures—a library, a printing-press. "Four years later, the East was in flames : Cydonia ceased to exist." The schools were broken up, the libraries destroyed, and the masters perished or were dispersed.

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“At one time it was the fashion to despise the Greeks,” writes M. C. Allard, “and not only to believe them quite incapable of any real regeneration, but to accuse them of all the vices. A German publicist, M. Falmerayer, a true son of the land of dreams and sophisms, recently thought to destroy his temple of Ephesus by maintaining that there were no more Greeks. To this strange assertion we can reply that, in the Archipelago and in Asia Minor, and everywhere in the East where commerce, industry, and civilisation appear to have sprung into life again, we have seen none but Greeks, and the action of this noble race does not extend solely to those lands which are really their own; in the Archipelago and in Asia Minor the Greeks have set up their offices everywhere, and given everybody an opportunity of studying them closely. The Greek colony has furnished one of the brightest gems in the commercial diadem of Marseilles, and in this metropolis of the Mediterranean Greek business houses enjoy a reputation for honour and probity equal, if not superior, to that of other nations.”

M. Edmond About, who, from the mere study of a small section of the Athenians, has been too

severe on the Hellenes of all countries, at least admits that in the Greek national character there is great originality.

“According to a certain paradoxical school,” he says, “there are no longer any Greeks in Greece ; all the people are either Slavs or Albanians. It is sufficient, however, to have eyes to distinguish the Greeks, a refined, delicate people, from the coarser Albano-Slavs.”

“After the Macedonian conquests,” says a great authority, M. F. Lenormant, “and even before that epoch, the Greeks had dispersed over an immense space of territory, acting everywhere by means of their dual intellectual and commercial superiority, modifying, by simple contact with themselves, the most widely-differing tribes and winning them over to Hellenism, leaving, in short, the indelible stamp of their passage even in the remotest regions of the ancient world. This superiority they owe, not to the vigour or the physical purity of their race, or to the effective power of their cities, but to their strength of mind and their genius.

“The Greek race,” he continues, “in our own day represents the motive power in the Ottoman

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Empire, as twenty-two centuries ago it did in Asia of the Persians. Wheresoever commerce, industry, and civilisation have been raised to any high degree of development in Oriental countries, the honour thereof belongs to the Greeks. Throughout Turkey (ecclesiastics, physicians, lawyers, money-changers, merchants, Pashas' secretaries, financial employés) the Greeks have thrown a kind of immense network over the country, which has enabled them to get all business into their hands."

"The study of the sciences," writes M. Ch. de Scherzer, the Consul-General for Austro-Hungary at Smyrna, in 1872, "has always been pursued with zeal and devotion in the hot-houses of Hellenism at Smyrna, Chios, Avaïli (Cydonia), and Patmos; but it is only in our own day that instruction has become common amongst the people. The influence of the national idea which dominates the Greek mind has given birth to a movement of progress which has penetrated into the remotest regions of Anatolia, over which the Turkish system had weighed so heavily. Schools are springing up everywhere; the smallest communities are hastening to set aside their meagre municipal resources for purposes of public education before

anything else. This zeal is all the more praiseworthy in that it proceeds entirely from the initiative of the Greek population, which, in this respect, finds no governmental support."

Yet one more testimony from one of the most recent authorities, the eminent geographer M. E. Reclus, who visited the East after 1880:—

"No people," says he, "knows better how to prepare for the future by the education of their children. In every village the schools are the chief feature. The merchants, after having discussed prices and the delivery of their goods, turn their attention to pedagogic subjects, appraising the merit of the teachers and encouraging the students. When a stranger visits them they at once show him over their scholastic establishments and their orphanages, asking him to examine the children and to give his opinion on questions relating to education.

"There is no sacrifice the communities will not make to endow and keep up the schools. Many a rich man builds schools during his lifetime, and in their wills patriots never forget the education of children."

I stop here for fear of wandering too far

from the principal subject of this book. I will only add that, out of a population of about 400,000 inhabitants in the province of Smyrna alone, the Hellenic communities possess more than 100 superior and middle schools, and more than 250 mixed schools, attended by more than 20,000 pupils.

These figures speak so eloquently for themselves as to dispense with all commentary. They suffice to show what private initiative can achieve when it is directed by patriotism and a will of iron, for all these scholastic establishments, which owe absolutely nothing to the State, are kept up entirely by endowments and yearly subscriptions due to private liberality.

In the superior and middle schools the subjects taught are Greek and foreign literature, history, mathematics, geography, the elements of physical sciences and of philosophy, and anthropology, foreign languages, &c.

Such, in short, is the intellectual movement among the Hellenic communities in the East, which, so to speak, develops spontaneously from day to day even as far as the remotest regions of the interior of Asia.

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This is the admirable scholastic and communal organisation which, in certain Neo-Turk Nationalist centres, it is desired to assail by attempting to assimilate and absorb these Christian nationalities into themselves—they who have not yet any scholastic system, even in an embryonic state—they who, from the point of view of education, are the most backward and ignorant of people.

“If by any impossible chance,” says M. Ch. Scherzer, already quoted above, “the spirit of one of the founders of Islamic power or of Oriental literature were to return to the earth, he would veil his face at sight of the ineptitude which has overcome the sons of the Prophet. Rational education and teaching, which alone could infuse healthy and vigorous life into any social organism, are unknown things here.”

And these are the elements with which the Young-Turks hope to be able, in the twentieth century, to rob the Christian population of the rights of communal self-government which they have enjoyed for more than five centuries.

Here, again, I prefer to use the words of my distinguished fellow-countryman, M. N.

Kasasis, the President of the "Hellenism" Association, who, the very day after the revolution of last July, wrote on this burning question with all the weight he is known to possess :—

"This, for instance," he wrote, "is the plan they would make for *Ottomanising* education in the Greek, Armenian, and Slav schools. They would tolerate national primary education, but secondary and superior education are to be compulsorily Turkish. The Greek tongue and those of all other nationalities would be proscribed in all but the primary schools, and the Turkish language only would be allowed. All this is in the interests of Ottoman union and Ottoman progress. Later on the proscription of the primary schools would doubtless follow, these being substituted by Turkish establishments. Article 16 of the Ottoman Constitution states: *All schools shall be placed under the surveillance of the State. It [the State] will be advised as to the means of unifying and regulating the education given to all Ottomans.* Therefore, all the Christian schools, those of the Greeks most especially, as they are the most numerous, once subjected to the surveillance of the Minister of Public

Education, would at once be re-peopled by Committees composed of Moslems. The education and instruction of Greek, Armenian, Bulgarian, and Servian youth would be in the hands of Moslems. This is an extremely grave question. If the views of Young-Turkey came to be realised, it would be all up with non-Moslem nationalities; in time they would end by being inevitably absorbed by the Turkish mass. This is exactly the aim of Young-Turkey, but it is an absolutely inadmissible one."

Observe, it is not the first time that attempts of this nature have been made for the purpose of forcing the exclusive study and knowledge of the Turkish tongue on the non-Moslem population. Save certain exceptions, the Christians, notably the Greeks, have opposed a determined and victorious resistance to this curious attempt. There is a Turkish proverb which says jokingly *Turtché bitmeyen Allaktan korkmaz* (Who knows not the Turk, fears not God). This is merely a popular saying, but it is significant. Are they going to raise it into a national dogma now?

One could understand that at the worst the official language of the Empire should be Turkish,

and even then there would have to be exceptions for some regions and the provinces—the Greek Archipelago, for instance, which has no Turkish population at all. But from that to attempting to suppress the teaching of the national languages is not only excessive, but even impossible, chimerical, and dangerous. In regard to Hellenism, such an attempt would be truly monstrous. To wish to sacrifice the study of the Greek tongue, the source of all civilisation, to the Turkish tongue—what an aberration! Do not the protagonists of Ottoman liberty know that there is no people aspiring to a front rank amongst civilised nations that does not for that very reason seek to drink from the fountain of classic beauty?

The Turks have everything to gain, not only by respecting the teaching of the Greek language, but still more by spreading the knowledge of it amongst themselves, and letting it have a prominent place in their establishments.

The Hellenes, on their side, have every interest in studying the Turkish language, the language of the people with whom they mix, and will doubtless mix more and more under the new system.

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The Neo-Turk Nationalists are probably aware

that the Romans, long before the Moslem invasion, became the absolute masters of the whole basin of the Mediterranean and Asia Minor, that is to say, that they accomplished a unique work in history in making one self-same State of all the countries all round the curiously accidented coast of the Mediterranean. But, according to the oft-quoted words of Horace, *Vanquished Greece in turn conquered her fierce conqueror*; the gracious influence of Hellenism brought about a veritable revolution in Rome.

Before coming under this influence Rome possessed no literature; it was their knowledge of Greek literature that inspired the Romans with the taste for letters. Their eloquence underwent a change, and improved under the influence of Greek rhetoric. For a long time Roman eloquence had remained austere and rude; after contact with Greece it became an art. The young Romans preparing for the bar or the tribune—and whom the Young-Turks would do well, in their own interests, to imitate—used to go to the great schools of rhetoric in Greece to perfect their studies. Greek literature therefore exercised great influence on Latin literature. Greece was unquestionably the school

of Rome. This influence of Hellenism on the development of the Roman mind was combated in vain by a party which wanted to keep Rome strictly faithful to her national traditions ; in vain did the head of this party, Cato the Censor, declare war to the knife to the admirers of Hellenism. Let us hope that, in the best interests of Young-Turkey, the insensate war that the modern Catos of Moslem Neo-Nationalism are embarking upon against the immortal Hellenic school will likewise be in vain. In Rome the philhellenic movement became more and more accentuated, and always, even at its apogee, Latin literature, to the greatest advantage of Roman power, remained tributary to Greek literature.

Of the Latin writers of the period of Augustus, there was not one but had studied the Greek poets or prose writers. Polybius, the first orator of Roman civilisation, wrote in Greek ; and side by side with him might be named a pleiad of others.

The Greek language was spoken in a great part of the Roman Empire, and in the higher ranks of society it was considered the language to be spoken by choice.

Generally speaking, the Greeks were the masters

of the Romans in literature as well as in politics, just as they were in the Ottoman Empire for a long time under the all-powerful Sultans.

We therefore firmly believe that if the Young-Turks desire to make a strong State of liberal Turkey, developing civilisation and progress in the East, free from all foreign dependence, they should, at all costs, not only respect, encourage, and protect Hellenic teaching in the schools so admirably organised by the Greek communities, but it would be an act of the highest policy on their part were they to favour it and introduce it into the State schools, *at the same time adopting the Greek language, side by side with the Turkish language, as the official language of the Ottoman Parliament.*

The latter-day Catos of Young-Turkey would do well to read attentively and with an unbiased mind what has gone before and what is going to follow, and to meditate on the words of a disinterested man of the same country as themselves, and who has no other wish than to see Young-Turkey become really great, effectually regenerated, truly liberal, powerful, progressive, and prosperous, both deserving and commanding respect.

Ichallah !

CHAPTER VII

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND FRATERNITY

FROM all that is happening in Turkey at present it is only too painfully evident that the quasi-change of system has altered nothing, either as regards the proverbial public insecurity and the administration of justice, or as regards the shameful methods prevalent in the old system concerning the treatment of Christians. On the contrary, the old paraphernalia of absolute power and arbitrary rule, having passed into the hands of new men, subsists more than ever with all the fatal mistakes of Asiatic tradition, and it is with the deepest regret that we are constrained to note that, at the rate at which things are moving, nothing will be changed for some time to come, for these men, whether they be Old or Young-Turks, are all made of the same clay and imbued with the same principles, and have, with rare exceptions, been taught from their cradles, by both mother and nurse, to hate

the Ghiaour (Christian, Infidel) with an implacable hatred, and to think that the Turk is born to be the master, and the Ghiaour to serve him and minister to his wants.

The triple task of preaching, teaching, and administering justice has been seized and kept by the Imans and the Ulemas, the criers and directors of prayer, whose dual function it is to guard and to sweep out the mosques.

"At home, as at school, the Moslem learns nothing which will be of use to him in the course of his life. The father does not trouble himself about the children, the mother has no authority over them. . . . There are hardly any schools in the country. Those in the towns are worth nothing. . . . Brought up by an ignorant mother, the young Turk passes into the hands of the *Hodja* of the *Metkeb* (schoolmaster), who is scarcely less ignorant. It is not surprising that the middle-class Turk should be cunning, ignorant, and fanatical." ¹

"The ignorance of the Turkish woman," writes the Vicomte de la Jonquière in his *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman*, "is only equalled by her fanati-

¹ *The People of Turkey*, vol. ii. p. 180.

cism ; in this last respect she is, however, in advance of the fanatics of the old Turkish party.

“The children, with whom the mother has little or nothing to do, live in the harem, under the mercenary care of servants or slaves. The first examples to meet their eyes are bad, the first lessons they receive pernicious, and thus is a precocious germ of corruption sown in their minds. Flattered and cajoled, accustomed to have every one give way to their will, and hearing themselves incessantly spoken of as beys, lords, and masters, they end by believing that they do not require to learn anything or to know anything, and the family fans this belief: the mother thinks it strange that her son should go to school ; the father, generally incapable of resisting the seductive influence of the harem, lets things go. By way of yet further developing the child’s vanity and presumptuousness it is decked out in the insignia of its father, if the latter occupies an official position. Any day one may see the astonishing sight of boys of six or seven years of age strutting gravely about the streets in the uniforms of

officers, varying from the grade of a sub-lieutenant to that of a *mudir*.

"The Turkish woman, generally purchased here, there, or anywhere, has, strictly speaking, no country; her thoughts never reach beyond the walls of the harem; she is totally ignorant of the sentiment of patriotism. And how could she know anything about it? No one has ever spoken to her of duty, self-sacrifice, or renunciation; these, the highest qualities that go to make the love of one's country, are to her empty words void of all meaning."

Trained by such a clergy, and with the education that Moslems receive in their homes, their schools, and their society, is it to be expected that liberal institutions, or any serious attempt to establish a constitutional system, could bear wholesome fruit and improve the wretched condition of the Christians? What *equality* of justice and civic rights can there possibly be between a Christian and a Turk, since the Koran, which still remains the civil code of the Ottoman State, expressly forbids it?

The Christian, even under a constitutional régime, will always be the oppressed, and the

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Turk, his oppressor (for the faith of Islam will not admit of the divinities of Justice and Equity sheltering the Faithful and the Ghiaour side by side under their ægis).

And when such beliefs rule in our own day in Constantinople, Smyrna, and Salonica, it is not difficult to divine what is going on in the distant provinces of Asia Minor.

“One can only conclude therefrom that Orientals are incapable of change, except under pressure of external action, and not from the effect of their own desire or personal effort.”¹

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Who in the West knows, for example, that the rights of property are, strictly speaking, non-existent in Turkey, and that real estate consists in *vacoufs*, that is to say, in pious Moslem establishments, and that any one who is in enjoyment of the same cannot dispose of it freely before having first obtained a transfer in *mulk* (a fee simple to himself) by paying for it.

“Moslem law ascribes all landed property to God, the only legitimate and eternal owner,

¹ *La Production, le Travail et le Problème Social, dans tous les pays, au début du XX^e Siècle*, Léon Poinsard.

whose temporary but universal lessee the sovereign is.

"Every Moslem State, therefore, possesses enormous properties, *vacoufs*, and this mortmain, little by little, absorbs all public and private property."¹

Well, even in the present day, under the régime of the Constitution, all these operations transferring a *vacouf* into a *mulk* are under the exclusive direction of the *chéri*, that is to say, of the sacred law, and no Ottoman Parliament, whatever it may be, dare touch this law for the purpose of modifying or reforming it.

In the midst of all this confusion of customs, sacred law, and Asiatic traditions hostile to everything Christian, nothing but a miracle can foster the tree of liberal institutions, and cause it to flourish to such an extent as to spread its grateful and refreshing shade over the Christian people as well.

This is what every one frankly desires and hopes in Turkey; the Greeks, especially, are most sincerely willing to help in the production of this miracle. Unhappily, however, the Nationalist Committees have proved only too soon, by

¹ *La Révolution turque*, Victor Bérard.

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their unspeakable acts, that miracles are not to be in Turkey. And even had the shadow of such a hope, based on the principle of union and co-operation between the Turks and the Greeks, who constitute the majority of the Christian population, been cherished for the first moment or two in the minds of a few dreamers, it would have been rudely dispelled very soon, thanks to the unexpected chauvinistic movement which the Nationalists (very probably influenced by the enemies of Turkey, whose interest it is to sow discord and division between Turks and Christians) so inconsiderately stirred up against the Greeks.

It were vain to cherish illusions on this subject. When all hope of a closer tie between Turk and Christian has completely disappeared, which is what the most excited and ill-advised of the Neo-Turk Nationalists are aiming at, the end of Constitutional Comedy No. 2 will inevitably follow. . . . That is only too evident to the most superficial observer, to all, indeed, save those who are determined not to see it. The fact is, that the return of the old monarchical régime no longer being possible, the present

state of affairs must inevitably lead to muddle and anarchy, the most unmistakable forerunners of which are the recent attempts against the Christians in the neighbourhood of Smyrna, Sevdikeuy, Macedonia, and Metelin, as well as the acts of violence and excess of all kinds which are committed daily in Constantinople and in all the provinces, not to mention the flagrant act of indiscipline on the part of the *Union and Progress* Committee, through which the unconstitutional overthrow of the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, was brought about under the ægis of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity.

Machallah !

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Hopes were entertained that the repetition of the 1876 comedy in 1908 might have put an end to the mass of abuses arising from absolute power at the Yildiz-Kiosk, and which very nearly resulted in utterly compromising the very existence of Turkey. But nothing of the kind. Indeed, any one possessing a certain knowledge of men and methods Oriental, and not totally unacquainted with history, will readily see that the recent change of system, as regards form

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has effected absolutely no change, fundamentally speaking, in Turkey. From every point of view it is nothing but the continuation of the shameful Hamidian régime, with this sole difference, that the odious arbitrary rule and despotic methods of the privileged oligarchy of the Yildiz-Kiosk have now passed into the hands of an army of inflamed terrorists, who, under the device LIBERTY, EQUALITY, and FRATERNITY, are now exploiting everything, having for their device "War to the Christians."

The degenerate descendants of the great conquerors of old continue to believe themselves predestined to rule beatifically over conquered peoples, thinking of naught else but of oppressing them and grinding them down. Things are more or less the same now as in the days of the barbarian invasion. A singular effect of the languor and apathy due at once to the religion and to the education of the followers of the Prophet, whose principle is contempt and oppression of the Christian, whilst in their social and political life they have yet another maxim : "Why do to-day that which can be put off till to-morrow ?"

Generally speaking, the Turks possess the qualities and faults of hordes of people organised for purposes of conquest, but incapable of assimilation, and have never been able to free themselves from the influence of religious fatalism, developed by an ignorant and fanatical clergy.

Therefore *new Turkey* must not be taken to mean an unknown country suddenly springing from the old as the result of progress in civilisation, science, and modern ideas, such as the great reformers Rechid, Midhat, and their partisans had dreamed of. It is nothing of the kind. This is an illusion that will not come within the domain of reality for many a long day yet ; for, according to the Neo-Turk Nationalists on the Committees, "Young Turkey" simply means "Real Turkey," such as she has never ceased to be. In this respect, recent accounts of impartial observers do not differ widely from those of centuries ago.

We are not referring here to that imaginary Turkey formerly described by certain complacent publicists in magniloquent terms, and which possessed only one drawback, *i.e.* that it never existed. We are speaking of the real Turkey, the

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one which bears no disguise, and which unfolds itself in a pitiable spectacle as one advances into the interior of the country, throughout the whole extent of the Empire from the banks of the Bosphorus to those of the Euphrates. And the reason of all this is, that the Turkish conqueror did not patiently build up a centralised empire on rational and symmetrical lines as the Romans did.

“The Turkish Empire is a mosaic of slave, subject, privileged person, vassal, or quasi-overlord: every form of dependence is to be seen there; from slavery to rebellion, one meets with every type of obedience.”¹

“The Turkish Government,” says Baron de Tott, the man who best knew old Turkey in the eighteenth century, “may be likened at all times to an encamped army, whose general gives orders from his headquarters to ravage the surrounding country.”

“From his immense pasture-lands in the Byzantine Empire,” observes M. Victor Bérard, “the Turk has portioned out large and small compounds, *timars* and *ziamets*, which he has

¹ *La Révolution turque*, Victor Bérard.

distributed to his Sipahi horsemen, each Sipahi receiving, as a kind of share in the spoil, a portion of territory, lands and cattle (*raia*), beasts and people, all of which are subject to taxes and to the *corvée*, according to the power and caprice of the overlord.

CHAPTER VIII

GRANDEUR AND MISERY

DURING an interval of three thousand years famous nations, flourishing States, wealthy and magnificent cities, have one by one come into being, and then disappeared in this opulent region. Persians, Greeks, Macedonians, Romans, Byzantines, Venetians, and Franks have one and all fought for and possessed it in turn, until, after surviving the outrages of so many masters, this beautiful land has ended by falling under a most brutalising domination.

“ Out of all the regions of the world Turkey in Asia can look back upon the fact that she was once the granary of antiquity, and that she had the honour of being considered as the cradle of the human race.

“ This was the site of the brilliant and sumptuous cities of Babylon, Nineveh, Khorsabad, Nimrod, and Ashur, and of the superb palaces

of Nebuchadnezzar, Semiramis, Salmanasar, and Sennacherib.

“ There may yet be seen standing the walls and vaults of Seleucia and Ktesiphon, whilst in Anatolia archæologists have brought Troy, Ephesus, Pergamus, Hierapolis, and Milet to life again, and likewise in Syria we are able to admire the majestic ruins of Palmyra and Baalbeck.

“ These witnesses to a past greatness prove that at one time a marvellous civilisation flourished where now there is nothing but desert and devastation, as if it had been trampled upon by the steed of Attila in the past.

“ There, where at one time proud cities reared their heads, we no longer find, on going a round of some hundreds of miles, either habitations or vegetation. The sand reigns the undisputed master of these places, bearing witness to an ancient civilisation and fertility which have, alas ! disappeared, together with the system of irrigation canals established by the kings of olden times.

“ It is the same in regard to the plateaus of Anatolia, the plains of Chaldæa, and the regions of Syria. Everywhere the cause is the same : wars, inertia, or ill-will on the part of the administration,

insecurity, deforestation, floods alternating with droughts, famine, and depopulation.”¹

Out of nearly 45,000 square kilometres of arable land in Anatolia not 5000 are under cultivation, and that of the most primitive character.

Foreign conquest has sometimes rejuvenated the blood of the conquered people. For the people conquered by Islam *oppression has always been*, and still is, without compensation. Whether they be “Old-Turks” or “Young-Turks” in power, it is always the same privileged oligarchy growing fat and living entirely on the exactions and the labour forced from the oppressed peoples without exception, very often of the unhappy Moslem peasants. To collect taxes by oppressing the feeble, to live in luxury and splendour has always been, and still is, the chief care of these masters. Wherever they have passed, and wherever they have encamped, they have blighted the souls of the people and made the land barren. Notwithstanding the change of form in the old system, the position of the different populations becomes worse and worse every day. There is no security anywhere, less still in Constantinople itself, and yet security is the only

¹ *La Révolution turque*, Victor Bérard.

compensation which despotism itself owes in exchange for servitude. The municipal franchises and the privileges granted by the first great conquerors to Christian worship, and which had been carefully observed by all the Sultans up to the present, are now subjected to affronts on the part of the Neo-Turk Nationalist, self-styled liberal, Committees which they had been spared even when the conquest was at its greatest effervescence.

Ever since the shameful acts of the Committee of *Union and Progress* which led, in flagrant violation of the Constitution, to the overthrow of the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, the atmosphere has been charged with ominous signs of a terrible storm which is lowering and may burst at any moment.

The message by the commanders of the fleet and the army to the Parliament during its session, to state that they would recognise no authority but that of Parliament, is in itself one of the worst and most dangerous symptoms of all the events which have occurred and are still occurring in Constantinople, and which provoked the unconstitutional overthrow of the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha.

Should we seek to know how the most indepen-

dent journals of Constantinople, with far greater severity than ourselves, commented on the act of the said Committee of *Union and Progress*, the following extracts will serve to enlighten us :—

“The Committee boasts of the Constitution,” writes the *Levant Herald* of the 4th March, “but whilst screening its acts behind the Chamber of Deputies, it strangles national freedom, holding the Charter in one hand, and with the other it kills the Ottoman country with the weapon this very country entrusted to it for its defence.”

“Down with this wretched Committee !” writes the same paper, in the very heart of Constantinople. “And may the names of its members be struck off the lists of those generous Young-Turks who have ransomed their country. These names have no longer any right to appear on so glorious a list.”

On the occasion of this daring sally on the part of the *Levant Herald* against the all-powerful Committee, the Turkish journal *Serbesti* also gave expression to the following opinion :—

“Our esteemed contemporary, the *Levant Herald*, may be certain that amongst all Ottomans there can be but one feeling, that of gratitude towards a journal like the *Levant Herald*, which has always

defended Ottoman interests. The attacks of the *Tanin*, the organ of the Committee of *Union and Progress*, are nothing but the effect of a guilty conscience, and as such can have no influence on the minds of Ottomans.

“We would say to our esteemed contemporary that Ottomans, true Ottomans, are masters of their own conscience, as has been shown by history.

“The *Tanin* cannot therefore weaken the feeling of respect that Ottomans feel toward the *Levant Herald*, which sincerely defends their rights.”

In another article, dated 7th March, the same Turkish journal, the *Serbesti*, speaking as the organ of the liberal party, makes the following accusations against the Committee of *Union and Progress*, the gravity of which will escape no one:—

“The Committee not having succeeded in making the army its tool, wished to have a Government on which it could lean. It has succeeded in its designs. Henceforward it is the Committee that will dictate to the Government what it is to do, and the country will

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suffer for it, but it will not care so long as no personal interests are affected.

“The *Tanin* and the *Chourai - Ummet*, the enemies of the country, are exultant to-day. Their guilt is all the more heinous in that they attribute to ill-will the disappointment of our friends at seeing us in such a state, and have no hesitation in wounding them in every way.

“But the country, and with her all our friends abroad, perfectly understand that the aforesaid journals are acting, for vile personal interests, as organs of crime and treason for a few individuals. It can be seen that the *Tanin* is not in the hands of a deputy devoted to his country, but of a man who only seeks the ruin thereof, and who is the implacable enemy of liberty.

“We recently said to the Committee: *If it be your intention to serve the country, hand over your power to the Chamber.* But it appears that the Committee desires to parody Yildiz. The army which crushed the people has joined them. Will it crush them again as the tool of certain individuals? Alas! on one side it is the Government, and on the other side the Committee who are drawing upon the country. How many

absolutists by paying the imposts have become members of the Committee of *Union and Progress*, and how many true patriots have been considered as absolutists and traitors! Those who have burned villages and attempted the honour and life of their inhabitants are to-day members of the Committee. Why? Because they have given up part of their fortune. All who were traitors during the despotic system are now in power. Why? Because they are obedient to the orders of the Committee. Woe to any one of them who may show the smallest wish for emancipation: he would be turned out immediately.

“During the old system, in spite of their oath, the officials robbed, pillaged, plundered, and allowed themselves to be corrupted. Who is to assure us that those who have sworn fealty to the Committee will not do the same? Where is the sum-total of hundreds of subscriptions? Where are the taxes levied upon every vilayet, sandjak, kasa, and even the smallest villages; taxes, the minimum figure of which was fifty pounds, and which have all been paid in? What has been done with such important sums paid

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by the nation? If a part of them has been expended in entertaining the excursionists from Servia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Roumania, what has become of the remainder? Where is the balance? It is easy to understand now why the Committee will not disarm, and will not abandon their power in favour of the Chamber. They wish to handle and squander the funds they have drawn from the country.

“That is why they have removed Kiamil Pasha and Nazim Pasha, and called into power absolutists willing to serve their ends.

“The Committee should give an account of all the money they have received.”

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There is no longer any need to prove that if the Committees were the indispensable instrument for the change of system in Turkey, their continued stay, after the meeting of the legislative and executive bodies, constitutes the gravest danger, not only to any self-respecting Government, but even to normal action of the representative system.

The gravity of the situation created by the recent anarchic movement on the part of the

Committees, now become the real absolute masters of power in Turkey without being responsible for it, escapes no one. The situation is indeed extremely disquieting, and one cannot help inquiring what stability a Government can have that is no longer sure of its army, and which runs the risk of seeing its policy compromised by acts of military insubordination. Military rights and duties should not be confounded with rights and duties political. The welfare of the State would gain considerably if the army (which in no well-ordered country should be permitted to sketch an independent plan of action) were to remain faithful and obedient to the executive power alone, and follow the instructions which national policy dictates, and which in the end it is the duty of the army to carry out.

Any other independent course of action, contrary to that strict discipline without which no State can exist, can only lead to muddle and the most appalling anarchy.

The *Indépendance Belge*, in its issue of the 16th February last, very wisely remarks:—

“A Government cannot be placed under the

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control of a *political Club*, whose aspirations far outstrip those reforms which are immediately practicable.

“In any case, the present events are of a nature to profoundly shake the confidence of Europe in the efficacy of the efforts attempted to regenerate the Ottoman nation, and to restore a country which demagoguery threatens to ruin, after absolutism has drained it of its best resources.”

This question of the army mixing in politics is one which should be a matter of grave thought in the governmental circles and amongst all true Liberal Ottomans, for of itself alone such a fact constitutes not only a potential danger, but an effectual, visible, and tangible one.

It is to be hoped that wise and enlightened men gifted with the true spirit of government, such as happily are not wanting in Turkey, although they constitute a small minority in the governing circles, will succeed in opening the eyes of the masses to the alarming state of affairs created in the country by the tyranny of the irresponsible Committees.

The Committee of *Union and Progress* especially

imagines that it is to be allowed to do everything, but it fails to see what is beginning to happen all around it, in Parliament as well as outside the legislative body. All sincere patriots amongst the Turks themselves are beginning to feel anxious at this new slavery to which they are chained by the terrorist party of the prætorian Committees.

The choice of Hilmi Pasha, who has given Europe undeniable proofs of wisdom and moderation during his able administration in Macedonia, and the appointment of Rifaat Pasha in Foreign Affairs, are happily a guarantee for the future. Everybody hopes that the new Ministry, thanks to its unquestionable weight, will find a means of bringing back the excited minds on the Committees to a more reasonable point of view, so that they may set to work, in their own interests, to ward off the real danger which threatens them, and with them the whole country.

So deplorable a state of things can but contribute more and more to the development of all the artifices of corruption and intrigue in the new governing circles.

Distrust is already spreading everywhere, the

resources of the State are being drained, and the moral and intellectual strength thereof enfeebled to the last degree. Possessions and fortunes of a more or less considerable nature are concealed, for neither the life nor the death of the owner can guarantee him against arbitrariness and rapine. It is chiefly for this reason that the greater part of the best lands in the country remain uncultivated ; on account of the insecurity in the interior the finest country in the world has become a desert, and where a numerous population might live in abundance, a few scattered inhabitants often suffer from famine ! These vast regions, therefore, resemble an immense ruin, and the centre of the Empire, the capital itself, is nothing but a confused heap of wreckage, offering a spectacle of the blackest misery.

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Notwithstanding successive attempts at reform in Turkey since Osman II. (1622), the Turkish people scornfully reject every new idea, and give evidence of Oriental pride in regard to everything foreign, a pride which often goes so far as to be ridiculous, although they clearly perceive that without serious reform a terrible fatality is

carrying them irresistibly toward inevitable decadence.

"Reform in Turkey," writes M. Victor Bérard in his remarkable work, *La Révolution turque*, "since Osman II. has, for a moment, arrested the vices of the central administration and the extortions of high officials, but it has merely increased the abuses of provincial exploitation, the exactions of the Pashas, the violence of all the officers, and the sufferings of Moslems as well as Christians."

Von Moltke, who knew Turkey under the reign of the Sultan Mahmoud better than any one, writes too :—

"The reform in Turkey consists above everything in externals, in names and in schemes."

"Abd-ul-Medjid," continues M. Victor Bérard, "succeeds Mahmoud (1839–1861). Mahmoud's Grand Vizier, Rechid Pasha, remains in power, and Western Europe takes in hand the welfare of the Ottoman Empire against internal rebellion ; but reform is essential to its integrity. Abd-ul-Medjid, immediately upon his accession, promulgates his *Hatti-cherif* of *Tanzimat* : 'Full of confidence,' so this imperial Hatti ends, 'in the help of the All-powerful, supported by the intercession of

our Prophet, We deem it well to obtain for the provinces the advantages of a good administration by means of new institutions.'

"The problem is well stated: in this Empire, made up of subject, privileged and tributary provinces, the 'advantages of a good administration' can alone maintain unity, and can alone keep the Christians in some measure resigned to the Moslem theocratic yoke. For more than half a century the Turks in Europe have been seeking a *good* administration of the provinces, and at the end of seventy years (1839-1908) one may say that no solution of the problem has yet been arrived at."

The true inward meaning of that fatalism to which I have already referred is, that all idea of development and progress is crushed by Oriental inertia which, so to speak, denies all human perfectibility. Only a very few Turks, amongst those who have been educated abroad, admit, and not without pain and grief, that their country has fallen because she has lost her active and militant faith without having acquired European science. And, nevertheless, they say, the Prophet accounted the ink of the wise man as more precious than the blood of martyrs. The greater number of

Turks have admitted that a changing and variable legislation may be advantageous to other nations, but not to their own, since everything is contained in the writings of the Korân, which, according to them, has omitted nothing that can be necessary for true believers. They all keep their eyes closed, so as not to see the causes of their own decadence and the advance of neighbouring peoples. Living at a time when progress moves with giant strides, yet completely isolating themselves and repelling all reforms coming from abroad, it is not surprising that the mass of the Turkish people do not yet perceive that in future their nation will depend on those neighbouring peoples who have outstripped them.

The policy of all great conquerors has always aimed at absorbing all the vital principles which they have found in the civilisation and the popular elements of the conquered nations so as to fuse them all into one nationality. The domination of the Osmanlis, on the contrary, was imposed upon a mixture of peoples. Here, as in Austria, one sees the parts rather than the whole, the dissolvent forces rather than those which tend to unity, and one is struck most particularly by the

absence of any civilisation which might cement the scattered members of the Empire into one homogeneous whole. The Turks have therefore barely been able to establish a kind of external unity amongst the peoples they have subjugated. Toleration free from egotism, and true political wisdom, as we have said more than once before, might have reconciled all the subject nations to the conquerors and reconstituted a strong empire ; but such toleration and wisdom have always been entirely lacking in the Sultans, just as they are lacking in our own day, notwithstanding the adoption of the constitutional system in Turkey, a system of which barely the name is preserved. Never at any time have the Turks, even the most clear-sighted, endeavoured to attach the Christians to the common centre of the Empire ; on the contrary, they have done everything to separate them more and more from it.

CHAPTER IX

THE THEOCRATIC SYSTEM

THE true system in force in Turkey at present, in spite of everything, is the theocratic, under which no real progress and change are possible. It is true that Islamism is a religion with a great deal that is rational and very little that is supernatural in it, but its merits are only for those who profess it ; towards all others it is implacable ; they must either disappear or be oppressed. Whatever certain cosmopolites may say, the Korân does not permit the infidel to be treated like the true believer, or the Christian to have equal rights with the Moslem. So long as the Korân remains the basis, the fundamental principle of the State, the Ottoman Empire will not be able to rise up and walk in the footsteps of other civilised societies. One must never lose sight of the fact that the spiritual authority of the Sultans has always rendered regeneration in Turkey politically abor-

tive. She will never be able to recover from her disasters until she abdicates the claim of being the army of Islam, whose dominion cannot subsist side by side with modern social conditions. Her prejudices, customs, and habits have undergone no change from the beginning, and for this reason alone she cannot lend herself to the general movement of the civilised world ; but, on the contrary, she checks it instead.

This irreconcilable opposition may have been tolerable in the past, but is certainly not so in the present day. Little by little the lights and benefits of sociability and civilisation are spreading over the whole world ; Islamism alone escapes its vivifying action. Impassive and immovable, it watches the gap between itself and progressive nations widen day by day, increasing the constraint which this causes them. All hope of agreement or understanding therefore appears impossible.

“The transformation of the State,” writes the learned Ahrens, “is made under the shape of a contract or a convention which fixes the rights and duties of all, and establishes the form of government and the means of administration. This form

of organisation is only to be found amongst modern Christian peoples, and should be considered as a social consequence of the spirit of Christianity, for the Christian religion, by *raising man's personality and making him conscious of his own value*, has likewise taught him, although after *many centuries*, that he should count as a personal member, of his own free and deliberate will, in the constitution of the State."

Now, the Korân most positively refuses Christians the right to count as personal members in the constitution of the State in Turkey. Hence an insuperable obstacle presented by the sombre apathy of Islamism to the ardent activity of the Christian world. Add to that the depravity of governmental customs, the corruption of conscience, and the administrative immorality, and you will have an exact idea of the terrible gangrene which is gnawing at the vitals of the Ottoman Empire.

Nothing is stable excepting the instinct of rapine, and this certainly is hardly sufficient to form a State. In the new conditions which have been brought about by the prodigious development of human activity in matters industrial, commercial, and marine a Government is irrevocably lost if it

live for nothing but luxury, when this luxury is fed by nought but despotism and brutality, because work is a sign of slavery in its eyes. Here too, in order not to be accused of systematic detraction, we will refer to the competent and impartial testimony of eminent writers who have deservedly acquired a reputation for authority in Oriental matters. Gabriel Charmes, whose premature death was a severe loss to France, wrote :—

“As war is no longer a source of wealth for the maintenance of the position he (the Turk) has grown accustomed to, credit is his only resource. Now, it is with peoples as with individuals: they are soon at the mercy of their creditors. The Sultan Mahmoud has often been compared to Peter the Great, and with good reason. This sovereign, without personal education, isolated in the midst of advisers more ignorant than himself, constantly checked by prejudice and fanaticism, and, in short, working on a worn-out race, was no less a genius, albeit a less successful one, than the half-civilised, half-barbarous hero who gave to Russia the stimulus of youth and the impulse of life. From the depths of his palace, where everything was calculated to conceal it from him, he

perceived the modern world, and understood that unless Turkey were to mould herself to its image, she must *inevitably perish* under its blows. By ill luck he had not only the decrepitude of his people to struggle against : *the nature of his power* was an almost invincible obstacle to his great enterprise."

Marshal Von Moltke, already quoted above, a witness to the endeavours of the Sultan Mahmoud, gave expression to the same ideas with his habitual sagacity :—

"The long quarrel between Church and State which has persisted throughout the history of the West has affected no country less than Turkey, where the chief of the State is at the same time the head of the Church. Such a struggle for temporal power would be extremely perilous in a country where there are so many different peoples : Turks, Arabs, Kurds and Bulgars, Arnauts and Slavs, only united by the bond of faith, and where half the subjects are the spiritual parents of a neighbouring Power. It is true the Sultan is at the same time the Khalif, but, in this capacity, he is doubly bound to maintain the Mohammedan doctrine. Like the Mosaic law, that of Islam extends over a number

of external things. It raises police regulations to the rank of religious dogma, and opposes the development of thought, of general culture, and of material interests. It is a crime to dissect a human body: consequently surgery can make no progress; whilst the belief in predestination is opposed to any measures being taken against plague.

“An immense number of people are afflicted with blindness because the eye of the true believer may not be protected by a sunshade, and because he must touch the ground with his forehead when he prays. When the Khalif becomes the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, therefore, he is reduced to weakening the authority of the doctrines of Islam, the very ones from which he derives his absolute power.”

Therefore it is because he is the Khalif that the Sultan has never succeeded in reforming his European Empire, but this has not prevented Europe from admitting it to the number of civilised Powers. This complacent admission, however, on the part of the Powers has merely had the effect of inoculating it with all the vices of the West, without giving it any of its qualities.

Since Turkey has tried to join actively in the life of great European nations she has been relegated to the lowest rank, *because she imitates Western institutions badly*, and because she lacks the necessary aptitude to give herself a rational government. She can never become a State whilst the Sultan claims to be the universal Commander of the Islamic world.

The *Tanzimat*, the *Hatt-i-Humoyoun*, all the schemes, plans, and promises of reform, when put into execution, have succumbed before religious scruples and dogmatic impossibilities. Therefore, not only is the situation generally not improved in the East, but, in spite of the much-vaunted liberalism of the Committees in the present day, the confusion continues to increase in the most alarming proportions.

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In Turkey it is not a question of a reasonless, hot-headed rebellion against a paternal Government; it is a case of unhappy men deprived for centuries of all civil rights, worried even in the enjoyment of their private and domestic lives, helpless against oppression, forced to live a purely material life, fearing at every moment for their

miserable lives and for a future not even cheered by hope.

In Europe, however bad a Government may be, it always appears to the mind as a concerted and homogeneous whole—in a word, a social edifice. It is true that any attempt to destroy this homogeneity and to disturb this social body constitutes a veritable attack upon its private rights, and at the same time a breaking of previously recognised civil rights. It is readily understood that such an act should necessarily be repressed, but it is not the same when Eastern peoples rise against their oppressors. In Turkey the Government has never been worthy of the name. It has never been methodical; up to the present it is nothing but a kind of medley, and worse even than that, for it represents disorder, anarchy, and incoherence in power.

The reign of the arbitrary and of force, the most intolerable absolutism, vices, errors of despotism, social irregularities, disorders throughout the whole extent of the Empire, general misery, and, just recently, the gagging of the liberal press—under the régime of liberty—these are the distinguishing marks of Ottoman Constitutional Nationalism in the twentieth century!

Following upon all these horrors without name, there is now rising a perfect tide of indignation in the breasts of the people against the Committees who, now hiding behind the disguise of a political party, persist in misunderstanding its rights and opposing its aspirations.

What happened to the all-powerful tyranny of Yildiz will undoubtedly also happen, sooner or later, to the power of the Committees who have put their own personal interests over and above the general interests.

CHAPTER X

WHAT HISTORY WILL SAY ABOUT THE REVOLUTION OF THE 11/24TH JULY

THE moment has not yet come to write about the Turkish revolution of 1908. When this comes to be done in the light of such authentic testimony as the impartial historian alone can collect, it will be seen that it differs widely from the fantastic accounts of self-complacent panegyrists and of certain enthusiasts of the moment.

Severe and impartial history will never admit that constitutional ideas of *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity* can have germinated suddenly and, as it were, by enchantment in the brains of the *Nizams* (regular troops), the *Redifs* (reservists), and the *Bashi-Bazouks* (irregular bands); neither will it state that these fanatics of Asia, suddenly illumined by the descent of the Holy Spirit, experienced an irresistible desire to share at a common festival with the Christian in the benefits and sweetness of *Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity*.

None but the babblers of the *Tanin* journal and the turbaned Ciceros of the hippodrome at Stamboul would be capable of talking such nonsense to us.

True History, on the contrary, will, with her inexorable impartiality, say that after the tyranny and intolerable demands of the Hamidian system, which did nothing but maintain and fatten with impunity an oligarchy of privileged fanatics at the Court of Yildiz-Kiosk, whilst State functionaries and army men for twelve months in the year would only receive one or two months' pay out of their yearly stipend ; that after bearing long and patiently every kind of trial and privation, and being exposed to the greatest sufferings, the victims and the Moslem proscripts of the abominable Hamidian system, having found in the unspeakable and ever-increasing misery of the army all the elements of revolt and insurrection, were clever enough to take advantage of them to ensure an effective help to themselves against tyranny and their common oppressors, under the promise that, once absolute masters of the executive and the treasury, there would be no more sufferings or privations.

It must not be forgotten that the Turkish soldier, during the last years, besides arrears of pay, has been left without clothes, shoes, or bread, whilst the commanders, the *Valis* and those in high positions, rifled the barracks, stores, and arsenals.

Ragged, starving, eaten up with fever and all kinds of infectious diseases, the unhappy soldier was driven to brigandage and revolt as the only and supreme remedy to his horrible sufferings.

Prætorianism has always triumphed. It could not be otherwise with the Neo-Turk prætorians. The attraction of fat plunder in view was calculated to seduce, not only famishing, but even well-fed soldiers.

It was in such circumstances, which could not have been more favourable for a *pronunciamiento*, that it was possible to make a clean sweep of the terrorists at Yildiz-Kiosk without striking a single blow ; that is to say, the Young-Turks have only done what—modesty apart—I advised the Sultan to do in 1892. This is what I wrote, seventeen years ago, in my book *La Turquie Nouvelle* :—

“*Remember.* The horrors of despotism have never brought good to the predecessors of the Padishah ; they have all, or nearly all, been

strangled, poisoned, smothered, or 'clipped' by their favourites.

"To-day (1892) it is still optional to the Sultan Hamid to reconquer popular favour, and at the same time arrest the Empire on its downward course and save it. To-morrow it may perhaps be too late, if not for Turkey, at least for Abd-ul-Hamid II.

"Let him remember the memorable example set him by the history of the reign of his grandfather, Mahmoud II. This sovereign brought an iron will to bear upon the work of reform which he believed would result in the regeneration of his country. The Janissaries, proud of the numberless palace-revolutions which they had brought about, were an insuperable obstacle to the projects of the Padishah. It is well known how he broke their power.

"To other men, other means. The present day Janissaries at Yildiz have, thank God, *no point of contact or resemblance* with the intrepid warriors of 1862, and if they do upset their saucepans or refuse to give up their aprons, it will not be necessary to employ steel, or fire, or shrapnel against them; a vigorous sweep of the broom

would be sufficient to clear out the impudent and greedy lot of flunkies who bring dishonour and shame upon their master, and are the cause of all the ills from which the State and the Nation are suffering."

Unhappily, that which the Sultan Abd-ul-Hamid never had the courage to do in time, a handful of courageous and intrepid Young-Turks have accomplished without difficulty, thanks to the help of the army.

That is what history will have to record in regard to what enthusiasts and philanthropists on the one side, and sycophants on the other, call a "Revolution," but which was simply a *pronunciamiento*, not having yet produced a single personality sufficiently capable or sufficiently strong to direct and organise the new state of things, of which the country stands in such pressing need in order to avert the anarchy towards which Turkey is being thrust headlong.

I had already expressed this idea concerning the character of the Young-Turk movement of last July in an article in Greek, published on the 28th January last in the newspaper *Athènes*, when quite recently a pamphlet fell into my hands,

written by M. N. Rizoff, a Bulgarian of Monastir, who, whilst very ably judging the last "Revolution," very justly inquires:—

"What, then, was accomplished on the historic day of the 11/24th July 1908?

"Report says *a Revolution*; history will say *a Pronunciamiento*, and history will be right.

"Yes. On this famous day a military *pronunciamiento* took place, and resulted in the re-establishment of the Constitution of Midhat Pasha of the 11/23rd December 1876, suspended before it had been applied. But as to the Revolution itself, that is to say, the political transformation of the Ottoman Empire, *that still remains to be accomplished.*"

Amongst the promoters of this purely prætorian movement there are doubtless some notable men possessing very high moral qualities and moved by an elevated and disinterested sentiment of liberalism, patriots richer in philosophy and in ideas than in experience, who sincerely believe in the possibility of the regeneration in Turkey on the basis of the introduction of a liberal representative system in the Empire. But before these rare and eminent personalities, deserving of all respect, the

historian and critic will only pause for a few moments, just the time necessary to render to them the respectful homage to which they are entitled, after which he will continue in his work of judging the facts as they are in their melancholy reality. He will therefore have to relate that, after the admirable sweep of the broom by means of which the mischievous band at Yildiz-Kiosk was so readily put to flight, events followed each other in rapid succession, in order to show civilised nations that although the form of government had changed in Turkey, the basis remains substantially the same as in the past, with all the errors, traditions, and hideous practices of the old barbarous system ; for according to the conception which the constitutionalists of the Young-Turk Committees have of it, the liberal system with them consists merely in proclaiming the idea.

And indeed, between the former terrorist system and the so-called Oriental Constitutional system, there is nothing really changed beyond the persons in power. The latter, for love of this power, so unexpectedly delivered into their hands, do not appear at all anxious, naturally, to relinquish immediately the attributes of the old monarchical

system, which they are largely making use of for their own profit. Hence the inveterate belief, amongst the people and the masses of the Moslem population, that *Liberty* simply means that every Moslem under the new system is entitled to indulge, at his own sweet will, in the most reprehensible acts : to kill, assassinate, rob, and oppress the Christian and the weak. The consequence is that all the crimes committed up to then by the sinister creatures of Yildiz-Kiosk are now committed by the "liberal" modern Jacobins of the borders of the Golden Horn.

One inquires then, and with some reason, how long such a state of things is going to last, as it is not of a nature to dissipate the distrust and race-hatred existing from all time between Turks and Christians. In these circumstances, is Turkey susceptible of regeneration and of becoming a progressive and civilising State capable of assuring equal political rights to her people ?

The question is one which answers itself.

The experience of more than eighty years of attempts made by intrepid reformers, such as the Sultans Mahmoud and Medjid, seconded by eminent statesmen of very different calibre from

the men on the Committees in the present day, has proved the difficulty of realising a work of this magnitude. Notwithstanding all the *Hattis*, decrees, special laws, international treaties, and the last Constitutions Nos. 1 and 2 of 1876 and 1908, nothing has succeeded in improving the miserable lot of the Christians in any way whatsoever, because the conqueror, the pure-bred Turk, believes that he alone is entitled to the goods of this world, to material life, daily bread, and so on, and that Ottoman subjects of every other nationality should still remain subject to taxation and to the *corvée*.

“From the highest dignitaries to the last of the foot-soldiers,” says Monsieur Victor Bérard again, “the staff of the Porte lives for nothing but extortion, and were one to sum up this *Art of living by extortion*, one might say that there are *four regular channels* for it—the Army, the Tribunals, the Highways, and the Taxes.”

That is why all the vexations and tyrannies from which the country suffered during the Hamidian reign are now rife in the present, since the seizure of power by the famishing Committees. It seems to be a point of honour

with each one to try and do his worst. And as the return to the absolutism of yesterday is no longer possible, the intervention of official Europe for the final liquidation of the "crumbling" Empire will be the inevitable outcome of the wildly insensate and wholly inconceivable acts of excited Young-Turk Nationalists.

The precursory symptoms of such a catastrophe are already beginning to manifest themselves on various points of the horizon, and official Europe is following, not without anxiety, the course of these phenomena which threaten the general peace.

In the meantime, so long as the Treasury possesses a revenue, and is fed either by loans or by indemnities which will not bear scrutiny, with which to meet the ever-increasing needs of the army, the present terrorist State, founded solely on Asiatic militarism, will be able to maintain itself without any violent shocks. But directly these golden sources, legal or otherwise, are exhausted, which must be the case sooner or later, the apparent tranquillity of Young-Turkey will vanish likewise, and the prætorianism of the present day will inevitably degenerate into

regional military dictatorships, and each army corps chief will rule according to his taste and caprice, like a true satrap, indulging with impunity in all kinds of extortions and persecutions as regards the inhabitants for the maintenance of his troops.

All connection with the central power will be completely severed, and anarchy in its most hideous shape, with all its grievous consequences, will drive the country to its utter dislocation, and so open wide the door for foreign intervention.

At the rate at which things are going, one would think that the Turks would rather give up their country province by province than renounce despotism and try seriously to effect a general reform which might ensure the progress, peace, prosperity, and integrity of the Empire as it stands at present, after the irreparable amputations of the unhappy past.

The bare announcement of a reform calculated to establish equality amongst all the subjects, without distinction of race or religion, wounding as it is to Moslem pride and disturbing to their narrow interests, incites them to commit more

rigorously than ever those traditional abuses which they call their rights.

Author's Note.—These lines were written in the month of January last. Never has any prediction been realised with such extraordinary rapidity, and so entirely beyond anything that could have been expected. It is only the diplomacy of official Europe that invariably and in all circumstances allows itself to be influenced by events most disastrous alike to humanity and to civilisation.

There was once a Christian world, a Europe with some kind of method, guided by a moral idea. Later on European politics were dominated, up to the time of Metternich, by the system of equilibrium maintained by alliances between royal houses. This was a selfish and exclusively monarchical policy, but it was a policy of a kind. A return to an ideal tempered with equity seems to have taken place in the policy of nations. The people counted for something, which was the necessary expression of democracy.

And this policy modern diplomacy abandons, casting it aside to enter into line with banking syndicates, whose prisoner it becomes, and whose

mercantile interests take precedence to-day of all other ideas, of all other rights.

In the last change of system in Turkey, for instance, the diplomatists of the Great Powers merely saw an opportunity for tripping each other up in Constantinople concerning Eastern affairs, and for evicting their rivals from economical and commercial positions acquired under the former régime.

To this effect the ambassadors of the Powers, believing in the all-powerfulness of the secret Committees, outrivalled each other in flattering and encouraging the worst instincts and the most insatiable appetites of the influential Young-Turks, with a view to obtaining concessions and military contracts for the benefit of financial groups of their own countrymen. This is what European diplomacy is mostly reduced to in the East, having become almost exclusively the business agent of international financial syndicates, according to whose private and narrow interests the destinies of peoples are regulated in the present day.

CONCLUSION

THE RECONCILIATION AND COLLABORATION OF THE RACES IS INDISPENSABLE

THE moment has come to consider what are the conditions necessary for the solution of the problem: Is Turkey capable of regeneration and of becoming a liberal State?

The answer is not difficult.

If this course of regeneration is to be pursued according to the programme of the Nationalist party, based upon the principle of the fusion of the non-Moslem races into one Ottoman Nationality, by their denationalisation, it will be a case, purely and simply, of entering upon a chimerical and most dangerous enterprise.

In the foregoing pages I have already set forth the racial gifts of the Greeks more particularly, as well as the strength of the feeling of common fellowship which unites them, making them at once the most numerous, the most cohesive, the

most enlightened, and the richest group throughout the whole of the Ottoman Empire. I shall therefore not attempt again to show here how puerile and idle it is to ask that this people should sink its racial individuality, and give up its admirable scholastic system, and allow itself to be absorbed by that metaphysical being, the Ottoman—this race which, during the bitterest vicissitudes of several centuries of slavery, has never wavered in the defence and preservation of its intellectual and moral patrimony which it calls Hellenism.

The Young-Turks are wrong to forget that it was the Greeks who first conceived the idea of uniting together in an independent society for the study, defence, and administration of their communal interests; and that it was they who showed the path to freedom, not only to the other subject populations, but to the Young-Turks themselves.

It was thus that during centuries of the Turkish domination, the most degrading for the conquered peoples, they were able to preserve intact their sense of individuality, and, at the same time, succeed in preventing, not only their own

absorption, but that of the other Christian elements as well, by the Ottoman Empire.

On the other hand, if it be a case of endeavouring to create an Ottoman State, really progressive and politically *one*, although composed of ethnologically different populations, making one country common to different peoples closely united by the common tie of loyal co-operation without *arrière pensée*, then—yes, the regeneration of Turkey is possible.

This co-operation, which, be it understood, must be effective, is indispensable as a primordial and fundamental condition of the welfare of Turkey. All that the Young-Turks are entitled to ask of the Christians towards such a co-operation is loyalty, fealty to the new system, and their help in the defence of the territorial integrity of the present Empire.

Absolutely disinterested advice in this sense has already been offered to the Young-Turks by eminent and highly competent men. Quite recently MM. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, Paul Beauregard, Aulard, Berl, Bérard, Grimanelli, Politis, and many other friends of Turkey, anxious for the establishment of a system of peace, justice,

progress, and liberty in the East, have impressed upon both parties the necessity as well as the urgency of this collaboration of Moslems with Christians, which they consider to be not only useful, but indispensable to the prosperity and salvation of the Empire, believing that without it no progress can possibly be achieved.

"The Greeks, on account of their aptitudes," writes M. P. Grimanelli, "their liberal institutions, their remarkable sociability, and their domestic virtues, are, most particularly for Young-Turkey, a necessary element of vitality, power, material, intellectual, and moral progress. . . . Through their knowledge, their business aptitude, and their power of assimilation, they are likewise in a position to contribute in a large measure towards the reorganisation of public services from administrative offices to diplomacy. . . . The great Sultans of olden times knew how to make use of them."

United by common interests, Moslems and Greeks would doubtless become very valuable natural allies, and they would then put an end to the grievous and violent struggles of race and religion.

It is to be regretted that these conflicts, of a more or less grave character, should have occurred from the first between these two elements.

It is, however, fortunately still time to do away with misunderstandings.

The origin of the dissensions was, in the first place, the incontrovertible fact of the abuse of power committed by the Turkish authorities at the expense of the Greeks during the elections, and afterwards by the flaunting of the Neo-Turk Nationalist programme tending to Ottomanise the Greek schools.

"The schools! the language!" as M. P. Grimanelli very justly observes, "these, to the Greeks, are as the marrow of their bones and the blood of their veins. Their scholastic work throughout all the East is truly admirable. Their language is the most magnificent jewel in their hereditary treasure. To touch their scholastic freedom and try to drive out the Greek language would be to inflict upon the Greeks the deepest of wounds. That were constraining them to become irritated and formidable adversaries, when all they ask is to be allowed to be friends and to act as partners and good citizens."

I will not linger here again on the barren ground of recriminations. I firmly believe that the reasons for a clear understanding and for sincere co-operation are as cogent as ever.

Greeks and Young-Turks should, on pain of death, come to an understanding, and co-operate towards the regeneration of a liberal and strong Turkey. This union, over and above any other, should be fertile in positive results and happy consequences, which would ensure at once both the peace and the good feeling of all the nationalities scattered throughout the Empire.

It must not be forgotten that if other nationalities which inhabit Turkey are confined, and more or less agglomerated in certain determined regions, as, for instance, the Serbs and the Bulgars in the vilayet of Uskib and in Northern Macedonia, the Albanians in Albania and Western Macedonia, the Armenians outside Anatolia, and so on ; the Arabs, Kurds, and Greeks, on the contrary, are in contact with the Turks, and intermingle with them throughout the whole extent of the Empire, both in Europe and in Asia, without taking into account the fact that they almost exclusively constitute the whole population of the Ottoman islands of the *Ægean* Sea.

Greeks and Turks, forced therefore to live together everywhere, have not only common interests to pursue and defend, but also common perils to guard against. This community of interests and perils especially should obviously lead them to an understanding and to a sincere collaboration, the more so that external perils are only too plainly manifest in the present day.

Does not the Bulgar peril threaten both countries, Turkey and Greece? Only a close union between Turks and Greeks could bar the road to the ambition and competition of the invaders, whose political work, since 1879, has to its account nothing but surprises and daring attacks, the savage character of which is worthy of the first Bulgar invasions, together with exploits accompanied by acts of brigandage and rapine of unspeakable atrocity. Emboldened both by impunity and by the rivalry between the signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, and having succeeded once and again in their attacks on Eastern Roumelia, in flagrant violation of the aforesaid treaty (the most solemn act of the European Areopagus of the end of the nineteenth century), who is to prevent the Bulgars from, sooner or later, attempting a new

adventure into Macedonia, seeing that they are upheld and protected in this kind of enterprise by certain great Powers ?

Therefore nothing but close union between Turks and Greeks can possibly form the best kind of rampart against this dangerous and ever-increasing invasion.

Who, whether Young- or Old-Turks, cannot already see that the aim of Bulgar and Panslavist policy is the dismemberment of what still remains of the Ottoman Empire in European Turkey ?

It will only be when Greece and Turkey fully understand the mutual advantages of their union that they will themselves see the usefulness of going yet further on the path of mutual agreement.

The Turks reproach the Greeks in Turkey with looking too much towards Athens, and listening to the Greek Consuls in Turkey. Can they not understand that when the Greeks in Turkey are treated by the Turks as they should be, on the same footing of political, civil, and administrative equality as Moslems, this grievance will cease of itself, without taking into account the fact that Constantinople and Athens will become the best of allies ? We cannot repeat too often that for

Greece most especially, a new Turkey, strong and respected, will form the strongest dyke against the tide pouring down from the north.

Now, Turkey, if we are well informed, can find in her own composite character and heterogeneous ethnical condition her own source of greatness.

For the internal development of such a political body, Greeks and Turks unquestionably represent two forces which are the complements of each other. They consequently require each other.

Let the Young-Turks have the understanding to suppress once and for all the causes which make the Christians distrustful of them, and they may be sure that the latter will be quite content to live amongst them under a constitutional system, provided that it be really a paternal rule of equity, justice, equality, and liberty.

Therefore, we most sincerely hope that the rulers of Young-Turkey will resolutely resist the suggestions of intemperate nationalism, certain manifestations of which have, unhappily, excited the distrust and the fears of the Christians.

We have every confidence in the breadth of thought, the clear-sightedness, and the wisdom which the true liberal Ottomans will not fail to

employ in order to divert the more excited members of the Nationalist party from committing a very grave mistake, which might later on perhaps become irreparable, and of which no one can foresee the disastrous effect both now and in the future.

In short, once the principle of union and loyal co-operation, without *arrière pensée*, between Turks and Christians is definitely adopted and admitted as the fundamental basis of organisation and of the application of the representative system in Turkey—in its best sense, according to which there can be no more masters and raïas—the remainder of the general liberal programme to be worked out cannot present any insuperable difficulties. In order to proceed with the establishment of this programme it certainly requires the calm that time alone brings, the intelligent support of all, and the confidence of the country. No country has ever passed from one political system to another by means of a revolution, without traversing a period of crisis fertile in accidents and disorders of the kind which we now deplore.

The civilised world wondered at the revolu-

tion of the 11th/24th July, on account of the noble character of the great patriots who prepared it in mystery, silence, and exile, and effected it in peace ; on account of the breadth of thought and the generosity of feeling which inspired it ; and the courage, disinterestedness, method, and decision which, at first, brought it its initial success ; on account of the wisdom and moderation which enabled them to resist trials well calculated to provoke anger, and perhaps lead to acts of irreparable imprudence.

Unhappily, amongst these great patriots and the majority of the members of the secret Committees the divergence of thought has been great, and, on the part of the latter, acts of indiscipline and anarchy have not been wanting.

Let us hope that the Turkish people will end by proving itself worthy of enjoying a liberal system, and that the most enlightened men of the Empire will have the indomitable energy to cleanse the old edifice of its blind traditions, its unreasoning prejudice, and its inveterate habits.

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In short, Turkey has all the elements for acquiring a high degree of prosperity. What then

is wanting? The will. The reforms introduced since the time of the Sultan Mahmoud have not borne fruit, because the constitution of Ottoman society has always been in opposition to the progress of humanity. *Hatti-Houamyoun* have succeeded *Hatti-cherif*, but all the laws that have been framed, all the reforms that have been pompously decreed and solemnly promulgated, have remained a dead letter. A semblance may be granted, but the greatest care is taken not to carry it out seriously, and they continue to move in the same rut, and the same superannuated errors of centuries ago continue to be committed.

Why should we close our eyes to the fact?

The Ottoman nation is not yet ripe for the modern parliamentary system, decked out with Western formulæ and crammed with socialistic promises of reform. Turkey does not stand in need of this kind of parliamentary paraphernalia, nor of the buffoonery of 1876. What the populations of the Ottoman Empire require, from the commencement of the liberal system, founded—as we have already said—on unity, understanding, co-operation, and harmony between Moslems and Christians, avoiding as much as possible all

administrative and legal causes of friction between such widely differing elements accustomed to century-old antagonism ;—what we most especially require in the East, and that which we stand in the most pressing need of, is to secularise the executive by separating the theocratic power from the Khalifate.

For that, as I wrote on the morrow of the revolution of last July, it is necessary that the government of the country be entrusted, during the first period of the new system, to a National Assembly worthy of the name, founded on the representative principle in the second degree. This first Assembly should, at the same time, be a constituting Assembly, appointed to revise the Constitution of 1876, which is a somewhat imperfect sketch of a constitution, rendered incomplete by numerous lacunæ, which make it incompatible with the character and requirements of the Empire. Therefore, the dissolution of the present Parliament becomes a necessity for more than one reason easy to understand, and which it is superfluous to recall here. In order to prove how irregular is the working of this Parliament, it will suffice to point out the unpre-

cedented fact that the majority of Nationalists, who model their attitude and their policy on the ideas and orders of the secret Committees, being the first to recognise the notorious defects in the parody of the Constitution of 1876, have taken upon themselves to elect a parliamentary Commission composed exclusively of Turks of the Nationalist party, that is to say, to the exclusion of the Ottoman liberals and the Christian deputies, with a view to revising the constitutional charter of the new State according to their own interests!

The National Assembly, as we understand it, should, on the contrary, include amongst its members the most notable, eminent, enlightened, and competent men of the Empire, elected by the departmental Councils of the *Vilayets*, and their number should be *strictly in proportion to the population of each nationality*.

The executive power, exercised by responsible Ministers under the control of this Assembly until the meeting of the new Parliament to be elected on the basis of the revised Constitution, will draw up the programme of governmental reforms to be introduced in the country. This first Assembly will, in other words, be appointed to prepare and

make clear the decisions of the Sultan, and direct the acts and the administration of the Government.

The reforms to be effected should be, at the commencement, as little complicated as possible, and should be restricted to :—

The reorganisation of the Administration.

To ensure order, public safety, and the impartial administration of justice in the country, as indispensable conditions.

To bring order into the financial administration of the State by trying, as far as possible, to obtain some sort of equilibrium in the budget.

To encourage foreign capital so as to develop the natural riches which the country possesses.

To favour all kinds of works of public utility, such as roads, improvement and fitting out of ports, &c.

The fact is that, however deplorable the present situation and economic condition of Turkey may be, it is still possible to improve them and put them on a good footing quite speedily by means of a "severe diet."

We have many examples before us—Hungary, Roumania, Egypt, Algiers, Tunis, Bosnia and Herzegovina. But for that we need have recourse to

strong, heroic, and immediate remedies. Nothing could be more dangerous than to be content with sedatives. The health of Turkey is a question of energy and understanding rather than of genius.

The financial equilibrium must be restored at all costs and as soon as possible ; and, happily, Turkey possesses to-day, in the person of M. Laurent, the man most fitted to ensure order in its financial administration, provided that he be loyally supported and seconded in his great task by the Ottoman Government, without hindrance and without chicanery.

It would suffice to set to work resolutely and firmly to effect a number of quite possible economies in all the departments, which would not in any way decrease national activity : the restoration of Turkey would merely be a question of very little time.

It is of the utmost importance, first of all, to put a check upon the surreptitious and devious methods constantly employed to meet expenses which will not bear scrutiny.

But in order to arrive at such healthy results, it is necessary that Ottoman statesmen of all parties, under the new system, give proof of supreme

patriotism, and unite in a common and sincere effort to effect national progress.

It will not suffice that such a programme be the object of spasmodic and momentary effort ; it must be the quasi-unique and national aim of all governmental activity for a long succession of years, no matter what the political parties that may succeed each other in power. It is only on this condition that the situation of Turkey can be cleared up ; it is then that abundant foreign capital will come into the country, a country where industrial, agricultural, commercial, financial, and maritime undertakings are so numerous and might become highly remunerative.

In order to ensure and consolidate such reforms it will naturally be necessary to gradually reform political customs, as far as possible, through the wider education of the people, enabling them to take a larger part in public life.

When such a stable system of internal policy has been established, then only will Turkey be entitled to aspire to free herself gradually from the various constraints weighing upon the Empire to-day, and to reconquer her sovereignty over the customs.

The greater this stability, the better will be the guarantee of order in the East.

But here again the political and administrative organisation of Turkey is not capable of constituting a living and progressive State without that social, economical, and intellectual framework which the Christian populations, and notably the Greek element in the Empire, alone can supply.

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Man possesses the natural right of freedom. The populations of the Ottoman Empire, having recovered this right, should never again part with it.

To believe that they will allow themselves today to be dragged back again to absolutism, no matter how it be named, is to cherish a vain hope. If the members of the secret Committees, under whose omnipotence the executive and legislative powers are at present confined, still cling to such an illusion, they must end by understanding that a torrent cannot be turned back, and that those who have seen the light will not willingly return to darkness.

Those who would attempt to steal such treasures may perhaps succeed for a moment through an abuse of power, and by using violence to enforce

their will. They are merely creating a situation which cannot last.

It would suffice that individual liberties should unite in one common idea of mutual preservation and equity, and out of this association would most certainly arise the only government of the people by the people.

If the Ottoman Nationalists are not engineering against individual liberty, what is the meaning of the granting of the Constitution to the people with one hand, and then confiscating, with the other, all political liberty and the liberty of the press, suppressed in open Parliament on the 14/27th March of this year, by a sudden stroke of the fanatical majority of the Nationalist party ?

Is not that absolutism in disguise, acting under the hypocritical appearance of a constitution ?

In every civilised and well-regulated country the people are composed of a body of men whose fundamental rights consist in the liberty and equality of each individual, and it is these principles of liberty and equality that constitute exactly the strength, dignity, and power of each citizen, as much for his own good as for the social and public good.

Now, in order to solve the problem of the new

government in Turkey, the part this Government has to play should consist in laying down the principles, laws, and regulations which should be subsequently applied to all the populations, without distinction of race or religion.

Unhappily, it is just this conception of the government of peoples that has always gone astray in Turkey, for the men who have been entrusted with power for the public welfare have always made use of it for their own personal advantage.

Will it be possible to restore to the government of the people that character which is of the very essence of its being ? If so, Turkey will become a great progressive and civilised State in the East ; if not, she will go headlong into that abyss of anarchy and military dictatorship, which everywhere, and at all times, has been the ruin of the most powerful States.

It is not by violence, and in defiance of the laws of humanity, that the foundations of lasting work can be laid. On the contrary, it is by moral, legal, and peaceful means ; by intellectual work, by the teachings of experience, the efforts of reason, and the inspirations of patriotism that the political and social progress of the Empire can be achieved.

The future belongs to the wise.

APPENDIX

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM BY THE LATE GRAND VIZIER, KIAMIL PASHA

ON Saturday, the 31st day of the month of January last, the tempest of opinions which burst in the Chamber was so terrible that, in order to escape its consequences, seventy Deputies immediately withdrew.

Outside, those who learned, by telegraph or by telephone, what had happened could hardly believe the news. Whilst alarmed at the consequences arising out of the situation, they received from those who were inside the Chamber, and who were working upon each other's excitement, the suggestion that this troublous state of things which had been going on for several hours would cease upon the fall of the Grand Vizier, whose authority had been weakened by the elimination of some of the Ministers. This fall should have depended upon a vote of censure; and those Deputies present, who asked nothing better, listening to these insinuations, hastened to issue by a great majority a vote of censure, thinking that they were thus working for the welfare of the country.

This outburst was not produced spontaneously, nor without preparation. One day, before the event, special messengers had been sent to Adrianople and Salonica. On the rumour that the Government was trying to restore the absolutist system, a party of officers of the second and

third army corps had received orders to hold themselves in readiness for action, and telegrams were sent in every direction, giving the impression that the latter were ready to march out to prevent the attempt.

Furthermore, some officers, previously advised, had sent telegrams to the Chamber, which were read out in full session, saying that they would not have the interim Minister for the Navy, and that they would recognise no other power than that of the Chamber. Thus people had been given to believe that the country was in a state of anarchy.

What has not this political uncertainty, deliberately brought about in a few days, cost the State and the Nation, and what were the grave questions constituting political obstacles that existed then, that do not exist now?

I had promised that I would publish a statement as soon as circumstances would permit, and I now proceed to publish a part of this statement, as I see no objection to my doing so now that all excitement has died down. Moreover, I see no impropriety, from a political point of view, in my making this publication.

Although the Constitution is not very explicit as regards the right of the Chamber of Deputies to summon the Grand Vizier and the Sheikh-ul-Islam to give explanations, nevertheless, actuated by the sincere wish to lead the country into a really constitutional path, I went personally to the Chamber, on its first summons, and, after having stated the political programme of the Cabinet, I received the approval and won the confidence of the National Assembly. In declaring that I should maintain my policy whilst, at the same time, respecting constitutional rules, I inaugurated a precedent for the future; but this precedent, far from constituting a duty on the part of the

Grand Vizier to present himself at the Chamber on a particular day and a particular hour, is, on the contrary, in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, and allows the postponement, in case of need, of explanations to be supplied. It was not intended to do away with the option granted to Ministers of presenting themselves or not at the Chamber, an option which exists also in the charter of other Constitutional States. To insist on this point would obviously mean to destroy the Constitutional Charter.

Nevertheless, on the receipt of a *tezkerah* from the President of the Chamber, on Thursday evening, 29th January (O.S.), I decided—so as not to infringe the rules adopted—to present myself at the Chamber on the day appointed. But on the morrow, Friday, the Russian Ambassador having advised me that he was coming on Saturday to discuss the Bulgarian question with me, in accordance with a telegram he had received from St. Petersburg, and having in fact come on that day, I announced to the President of the Chamber that I should not be able to attend at the Chamber before Wednesday, up to which date I should have to give my attention to the above-mentioned question and to other important matters which it was urgent to settle.

Meantime, there had been an outburst in the Chamber on account of certain insinuations which had been made to the Parliament, and thereupon, in the afternoon, I received a second letter from the President, requesting me to proceed at once to the Chamber and to furnish explanations.

As the reports which had been spread about were devoid of all importance, and as there was no cause for excitement, I replied that I would come on Wednesday. The

only purpose of my attitude was to gain time in order to attain by that date the results desired for certain political questions of importance connected with the most vital interests of the Empire, as well as to collect documents which, if produced unofficially, would serve to convince the Assembly.

My reply, which was explicit enough, to a third *teskereh*, not having been thought sufficient, a telegram was sent to me again requesting me to go immediately and without fail and give the required explanations. The reasons put forward were that the outburst had taken place as much amongst the public as in the Assembly on account of false reports concerning the dethronement which followed upon the Ministerial changes, as well as on account of the resignation of certain Ministers, which had created a very unsettled situation injurious to political questions both at home and abroad.

The public was not in the least excited ; the excitement only existed in the Chamber. I felt certain that this was merely a machination on the part of my adversaries, and in order not to furnish an opportunity for unfortunate incidents which might have reflected upon the dignity of the Chamber, I decided not to go. In my letter I stated that, in the event of the Chamber abstaining from taking into consideration Article 38 of the Constitution, all responsibility accruing therefrom would fall upon them, and that I intended to resign my office and return the Imperial Seal to His Majesty. I received no reply, and those persons who were present at the debates know exactly in what manner the vote of censure against me was passed, and how the Deputies were constrained thereto.

After this illegal act the President of the Chamber, accompanied by some Deputies, went that same evening

to the Imperial Palace, and before I had sent in my resignation, represented to the Sultan that my removal from office was imperative. In the *Hatti-Houmayoun*, read to the Sublime Porte, by which the post of Grand Vizier, awarded beforehand by the Committee, was entrusted to Hilmi-Pasha, the sentence referring to my resignation ran as follows: "The resignation of Kiamil Pasha being necessary . . ." clearly betraying the evil insinuations of some ill-disposed persons (as used to be the case under the old régime) in respect to myself. All this struck the public with astonishment.

All the excitement, which did not really exist, but had been invented by a few, was caused by the appointment of Zia-Pasha, Director of the Register of Lands (*Cadaastre*) to the vacant post of Minister of Public Instruction; of Husni-Pasha to the place of Arif-Pasha, who had sent in his official resignation; and of Nazim-Pasha to the Ministry of War in place of Ali-Riza-Pasha, who, for political reasons, had been entrusted with the post of Imperial High Commissioner for Egypt.

These appointments should not have given rise to protests, for it is the business of the Grand Vizier to submit to the approval of the Sultan the appointment of Ministers of whose capacity he is sure, and thus form the Cabinet.

It is worthy of note that the changes in the Ministries of the Interior, of Public Instruction, of Pious Foundations (*Evkaf*), and of Justice, as also of the President of the Council of State, which had taken place before these events, had not called forth any protests.

I learned afterwards that the appointment of Nazim-Pasha to the Ministry of War had caused the greatest indignation. And, in fact, on the day when this change

took place, towards the evening, Nazim-Bey, of the Committee of *Union and Progress*, came in great haste to inform me that this Ministerial change had caused great surprise to the Committee, and he asked me how it was that any one had dared to act without the consent of the Committee. I merely replied that there was nothing in this change to cause surprise.

The next day, Thursday, the Council of Ministers busied itself as usual with looking into current affairs and important political questions. In the evening, about two and a half hours after sunset, we parted on good terms. Nevertheless, after midnight Hussein-Hilmi-Pasha sent in his resignation to me. The next day, Friday, Refik-Bey, Minister of Justice, who was ill at the time, and on Saturday, Hassan-Fehmi-Pasha, the President of the Council of State, sent me theirs in their turn. As the *conaks* of the resigning Ministers are distant from each other and separated by the sea, they had not conferred together regarding their resignation, but the idea was certainly suggested to them by outside intervention. Nevertheless this intervention had no influence with Tevfik-Pasha, the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The resignations of the aforesaid Ministers were due to the change of the Ministers of War and of Marine. Nevertheless I accepted the resignation of the Minister of Marine. His successor was only appointed provisionally, and, therefore, it was unfair to make this an excuse for finding fault with the change. There remains then the question of the change of the Minister of Marine, but we shall deal further on with the reasons which led to that.

In reality there was no connection between the resignations of the three Ministers, which were tendered outside

the Cabinet Council, because, if my colleagues had stated during the course of the Council that they did not think the change of the Minister of War was in the best interests of the State I could not have assumed the responsibility of the uncertainty and danger arising out of the situation thus created, and I should have sent in my resignation in my turn. This, however, was not the true state of the case. The end aimed at in bringing about the resignation of the Ministers was, at all costs, to give the impression to the world that the situation was unsettled, and to prepare the way in this sense in the Chamber.

In order to explain the causes which necessitated the change of the Minister of War, I should state that the Committee and certain civil and military functionaries had attempted to meddle in affairs of State and establish a control in the fear of reactionary measures.

As the Constitution had been hailed with warmth and enthusiasm throughout the whole Empire, and no one wished for a return to despotism, even our soldiers being sworn to protect the Constitution at the price of their life, such a control seemed out of place.

That is what nobody would understand : the interference of the Committee in Government business has more than once paralysed the endeavours of the latter. Interference in Government affairs by Committees formed in all parts of the vilayets has weakened the influence of the executive and injured public order. Furthermore, the difference which arose between the officers who are the motive power, so to speak, of the first, second, and third army corps—officers divided into two camps, those who belong to the Committee and those who do not—having destroyed military discipline ; and, on the other hand, given the fact,

that the greater the order and discipline in our armies, the greater the discouragement in the ranks of our enemies ; and that instead of that, not only had the strength of the latter increased, but our army had become powerless to check internal disorder, it was high time that military men should abstain from busying themselves with politics and respect the hierarchy, according to law. But the Minister of War, Ali-Riza-Pasha, whose duty it was to carry out this task, although animated by peaceable, sound, and just principles, was none the less incapable of making his orders respected.

His communications and instructions did not prevail against the influence of the officers belonging to the Committee ; on the other hand, the acts of military men who made political speeches at concerts and meetings, and who appeared armed at the military manoeuvres and the theatre, not being consistent with discipline, with a view to safeguarding the discipline which was being undermined I proceeded, after due consideration, to appoint Nazim-Pasha to the Ministry of War, his ability being well known to every one ; and, having succeeded in a few months in re-establishing order and discipline in the second army corps, he gave proof of high capacity.

Notwithstanding that this was the only means of saving the Fatherland and the people, the Committee of *Union and Progress*, desirous of maintaining its prestige, led my colleagues to tender their resignations, and prepared my own downfall by bending the Chamber of Deputies to its will.

I think it would be advisable to stop here for a moment and consider the events and the situation which preceded this incident and led to the dissatisfaction on the part of the Committee towards my person, and which form, so

to speak, the prologue of this outburst and excitement and my subsequent downfall.

After the re-establishment of the Constitutional system, the requests of those who presented themselves as members of the Committee were granted as far as was possible in the circumstances.

Nevertheless, one fine evening, a fortnight after the meeting of Parliament, Major Ismaïl-Hakki-Bey and Rahmi-Bey of Salonica—the latter travelling as the political agent of the Committee—came to me and announced that the members of the Balkan Committee of London, who were passing through Constantinople, and who had been the recipients of great attentions on the part of the Committee, had been invited to supper at my house for the next evening. As I was totally unaware of their arrival, and had not received, either from our own Embassy in London or the British Embassy in Constantinople, any communication concerning the degree of importance of these gentlemen or the rank they occupied, it appeared to me extraordinary that people whose acquaintance I had not yet made should have been asked to dinner at my house, without my knowledge, as if it were an hotel. On my stating that until I had first made their acquaintance and myself appointed a day, it would not be convenient to receive them, Major Hakki-Bey and Rahmi-Bey angrily left me.

That night, after four o'clock, Ismaïl-Hakki-Bey and Rahmi-Bey went to the Palace and said to one of the chamberlains: "Tell the Sultan immediately that he must withdraw the Seal of the Empire from the Grand Vizier. If this is not done, we will go to-morrow, at the head of a detachment of soldiers, to the Sublime Porte, and turn the Grand Vizier out. Moreover, his removal from

office was resolved upon at the first meeting of the Chamber."

The chamberlain, much embarrassed, said: "For the love of God, how is one to approach the Sultan on such a matter at this time. Come back to-morrow and speak to him about it." On this reply they departed. On the following morning they returned, accompanied this time by another officer. I was present at this interview, summoned by an Imperial Iradé. When the meeting took place, in the presence of a chamberlain I inquired on whose behalf they had come, and whether or no they had the consent of the Committee to present themselves before the Sovereign. Full of confusion, they replied that all they did would be approved by the Committee. Thereupon the impropriety of their proposal of the previous evening was laid before them, that is to say, that a Grand Vizier, according to the Constitution, cannot be removed from office without a valid reason, unless he first tender his resignation.

For myself, I stated that the services I had performed during that period of crisis were a matter of self-sacrifice, and not of self-glorification or of personal advantage. Silenced by this statement they departed.

His Majesty sent word to me that if the delegates of the Balkan Committee should call upon me, it would be suitable that I should offer them tea.

The delegates of the Balkan Committee, men and ladies, twelve people in all, came to the Sublime Porte that day. I invited them to dinner for next evening, and, as some members of the *Union and Progress* Committee had also come, we were twenty-four in all; but Rahmi-Bey was not present at this dinner.

The Balkan Committee had been formed for the humane purpose of soliciting the protection of the English Govern-

ment in favour of the Bulgars of Macedonia who had been suffering from alleged persecutions by the Turks. These delegates were English notabilities, who had come to Constantinople, after having made a tour through Macedonia, with the object of finding out whether the Bulgars in this region required foreign protection after the Constitution had been proclaimed.

The Committee of Union offered similar hospitality to these delegates in order to show the bond of brotherhood which existed between Ottomans and Bulgars; this, at the same time, constituted a political expedient to win the goodwill of the Balkan Committee, and, by their means, the goodwill of the great English nation, towards the Committee of *Union and Progress*. However that may be, the Ottoman nation, thanks to the wisdom which they gave proof of after the restoration of the Constitution, had already won the sympathies of the English people.

That is why, at the last meeting of the Chamber, great efforts were made to bring about a Ministerial change, but they were not given effect to for fear of arousing public opinion. Talaat-Bey and Major Enver-Bey even came to me to state, in the name of the Committee, that in future my advice would be followed, and that it was necessary, in the interests of the nation, that all our efforts should be united.

A fortnight after this statement I availed myself of the invitation of the liberal party, who had organised a banquet on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Empire. I thought that the presence of the President of the Council was essential at a fête of this character. It appears that this point of view did not please the Committee, and the following day Ahmed-Riza-

Bey signified to me that I had done wrong in accepting the invitation. I replied that it was my duty to cordially accept an invitation to a national festival regardless of the politics of the party whence it came.

I had aroused and renewed the animosity of the Committee, which wanted nothing better than to find an excuse to bring about my downfall. And when an active man was appointed to the Ministry of War, and they understood perfectly well that discipline in the army was going to be ensured, and an end put to the interference of the Committee, they made haste to excite the outburst to which I have referred above.

The Ottoman Government will never be able to protect itself against such dangers unless it be seconded by a Chamber wherein liberty of conscience plays the leading part.

If the Committee insists on maintaining its influence, it will have public opinion against it; and if different currents of opinion act upon our army, it is impossible to foresee whither such anarchy will lead our country.

The Ottoman Government is confronted with two political questions of a very disquieting character, and if serious steps are not taken to smooth over these differences, great misfortunes may overtake the country. I should have proposed a solution of the Cretan question which would have satisfied both the rights of the inhabitants of the island and the wishes of the four Powers. We do not know to-day what shape this important question may assume.

As to the Balkan question, this is more important than the first. The present deadlock between the interests of Russia and Austria have, over and above everything, placed our country in a most difficult position, and unless great

tact be exercised, the situation will become increasingly difficult.

As Prince Metternich said long ago to our Envoy-Extraordinary, Rifaat-Pasha, "When the Minister for Foreign Affairs objects to the appointment of the ambassador of a foreign Power, he should be able to see the bayonets of his own men gleaming."

If in August 1908 we had had a strong army in Roumelia, neither would Bulgaria have thought of proclaiming her independence, nor would Austro-Hungary have cherished the idea of annexing the two provinces.

And, in order not to look on with folded arms at the dismemberment of Turkey, the post of Minister of War was entrusted to Nazim-Pasha, whose capacity is universally recognised. Those who thwarted the Government's action preferred their own personal interests to those of their country.

We had won the goodwill of Europe by the serious efforts we had put forth for the regeneration of the country; we had merited her confidence, and several capitalists had come forward with offers of millions for undertakings of public utility. The greater number had come in person; others had submitted, through the intermediary of their representatives, schemes for the construction of railways, the development of mines, the irrigation of plains, &c. If these schemes had been given effect to the people would not now be stagnating through inactivity, but would have had work. Now, however, the whole Government has suffered because it has passed into the hands of an irresponsible Committee, a thing never before seen in any civilised country. I deeply regret that all these capitalists should have withdrawn to await a more regular state of affairs.

All these commercial undertakings, as well as the monopoly of certain articles and the increase of the customs duties mentioned in the Austro-Turkish protocol, might help to restore the equilibrium of our budget.

In our present position it is scarcely likely that the Powers will consent to an increase in the customs duties. How will the Government succeed in its administration with a deficit of several millions? How is it to maintain two hundred and fifty thousand soldiers when it has no resources?

If this deplorable state of things could be remedied by establishing order everywhere and ensuring peace, a great part of the army might be disbanded so as to render agricultural services to the country. It is much to be regretted that these sound and comforting ideas should still be so far off.

At the very moment when I was summoned to the Porte the news of the deposition of the Sultan was spread. Indeed, this news had been put in circulation during the indisposition of the Minister of the Interior.

Whilst waiting for this report to be confirmed (for it might well have been invented in the same way as was a former one, which had been reproduced by the European press) it was advisable to keep it in mind.

At the same time, another report had been circulated concerning myself, to the effect that I was working with Nazim-Pasha to bring about a return to absolutism. And despatches had even been sent to several officers of the second and third army corps in this sense, whilst as a proof of my designs they cited the fact of the battalions of *chasseurs* having been sent back to Macedonia. Needless to say, all these reports were nothing but the purest invention.

In the meantime, the news had arrived that the Greeks near the frontier of the vilayet of Janina were being armed by the Hellenes. The authorities of the vilayet, therefore, applied to the Sublime Porte asking for four battalions to be sent to calm the fears of the alarmed population. At the same time a Moslem deputation had sent two telegrams to the Deputies for Janina, which they came and showed me, describing the situation in detail. They stated that the inhabitants, being in a state of great anxiety, had assembled, armed, at Calcandelen, and had asked for an armed force to deal with the situation.

As the affair was urgent, and it was necessary to send the battalions asked for, we wrote to the Ministry of War to send the said battalions to Janina out of the third army corps (seeing that we had already previously sent a great many troops to Tachlidja to deal with a rising of Serbs), and, in case this measure might give rise to the fear that the army was being weakened, we added that the return of the battalions belonging to the third army corps might be possible.

Likewise, the Minister then in office, Nazim-Pasha, in his reply, stated that, according to the telegram from the commander of the third army corps, the withdrawal of several regiments was not possible, and that there was no longer any need to send fresh troops.

In regard to the rumour as to our attempting to re-establish absolutism, the following should be noted:—

Fourteen years ago, when I was filling the office of Grand Vizier for the second time, having found that the administrative system had been considerably modified, and thinking that the result of the administration then in force would be disastrous, I laid the fact in all its details in the right quarter, and laid at the foot of the throne a

memorandum advising that the administration of the country be entrusted to a body responsible to the Sovereign and the Nation, in a manner likely to ensure the peace of mind of the Sovereign. This memorandum was approved, although, by virtue of an *Iradé*, two days after the constitution of a Council of Ministers took place, on the insinuations of certain interested parties amidst the familiars of the Sovereign, I was in the course of these two days removed from office in a strange manner, and appointed, by the decision of the Council of Ministers, to the vilayet of Aleppo, and thence transferred, or rather removed, to Smyrna, where, after having suffered so much from those who were instructed to harass me, all the world knows in what circumstances I was exiled to Rhodes, and how I was able to escape from this perpetual exile and return to Constantinople.

Had my adversaries also been animated by the same feeling of patriotism, and had they been willing to make some slight sacrifice, the old administration would doubtless not have continued, and the ruin of the country would not have been accomplished.

As to Nazim-Pasha, on a trumped-up charge he was degraded and banished to Erzindjan, where he remained for seven years in a dungeon without resources. His family were living in Constantinople in the direst misery. It was only after the proclamation of the Constitution that this unhappy man was able to return here.

Hence it is very easy to see how malicious was the report which was spread about stating that we were trying, on an understanding with him, to re-establish the absolutist system. The acceptance on my part, by Divine assistance, in my present state of old age, of the Grand Vizierate, entrusted to me by the Sovereign (in a moment

when popular joy was at its highest in consequence of the proclamation of the Constitution and generally over-excited against the defunct system), was nothing but a sacrifice to patriotism; my wish was to calm the excitement which was increasing at that time, to work for the consolidation of the constitutional system, and thus to ensure the welfare of the country by acquitting myself worthily of the patriotic mission with which I was entrusted.

Not aspiring, for my own part, to any honours, I hope with all my heart that my successors may be able to work independently of all influence, and to render the greatest services to the State, the Nation, and the country.

Having regard to the circumstances aforesaid, I leave it to the justice of public judgment to decide upon the value of the vote of censure passed against me by the Chamber of Deputies.

KIAMIL, *late Grand Vizier.*

THE END

